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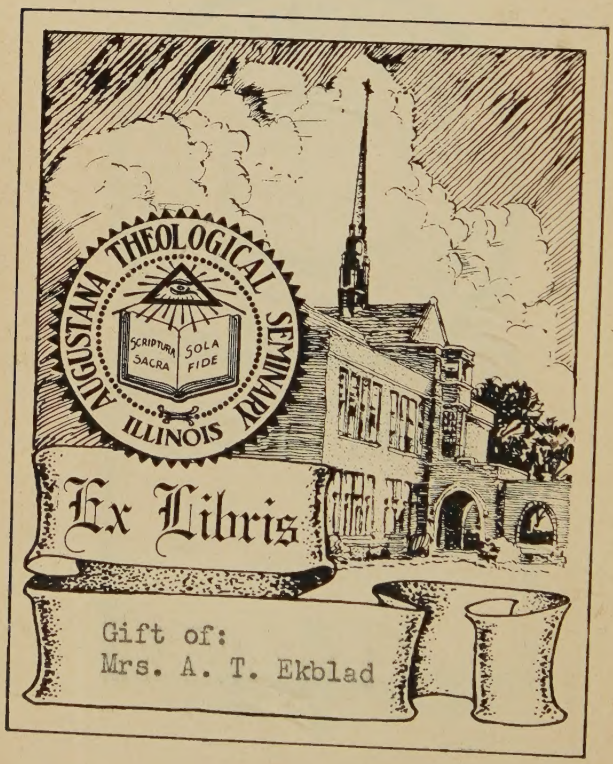
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WHAT IS THIS SPIRITUALISM?

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BY

HORACE LEAF

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CHAPTER I

THE CASE FOR SPIRITUALISM

The growing popularity of Spiritualism; its unique position; leads to a clearer conception of life; the Churches and Spiritualism; Rev. R. J. Campbell; has convinced many scientists of survival of bodily death; controversy in nineteenth century; opponents' methods; Professor Tyndall; Mr. Edward Clodd; Dr. W. J. Carpenter; supporters' methods; Sir William Crookes; Psychic Force; Cesare Lombroso; biology and psychology of phantoms may be constructed; Sir Oliver Lodge; "Raymond"; table-tiltings and rappings; their evidential value; scientific experiments with D. D. Home and Florence Cook; materialisation of "Katie King"; Sir W. Crookes sees medium and spirit together; photographs spirit form; Dr. W. J. Crawford; Miss Kathleen Goligher; the "invisible operators"; séance in the light; levitations and raps; Dr. Crawford's theories; trance control of Miss Goligher.

For nearly three-fourths of a century the public has been more or less interested in the subject of Modern Spiritualism. During the course of the great war, whilst other reli-

gious bodies have frequently complained of failure or ill-success, Spiritualism has rapidly increased in popularity and is to-day probably the only religious movement in the West that is growing. The world has now made the discovery that instead of being composed of a small number of ignorant and superstitious people, whose sole interest is in table-rappings and "weird" manifestations, it is represented by many persons commanding respect in other departments of activity. This is exactly what one of its most illustrious opponents—Ernest Haeckel—pointed out nearly twenty years ago.

Spiritualism has invaded the homes of prince and peasant alike, and many of the greatest minds, including eminent scientists, have made it a matter of special study; and whilst some have been unconvinced, others have become its enthusiastic advocates. This is unique in the history of religion, because the claims of Modern Spiritualism rest upon an entirely different basis to that of other religious beliefs. Whereas faith is the particular foundation of Christianity, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and Hinduism,

experiment is the foundation of Spiritualism. In other words, it is a science as well as a religion. In one sense its devotees regard it as a science throwing fresh light on the great problem of existence. In another sense it is an illumination leading to a clearer appreciation of the spiritual and philosophical value of life. That is no doubt why so many of its bitterest opponents have been leaders in religious thought. Full of confidence in the faith they already held, they could only regard as a dangerous interloper that which denied their assertion that all matters concerning the hereafter must be accepted by faith and not demonstrated as fact.

A gradual change has taken place in this direction during the last few years, and it has become quite common for clergymen to admit the correctness of the Spiritualists' position; so far, at least, as evidence for the survival of bodily death is concerned. Several of the most popular authors on the subject are ordained ministers in the Church of England; and quite recently the Rev. R. J. Campbell had an article in a leading Church

journal, in which he declares that it is useless to deny the reality of the experiences on which Spiritualists base their claims. Clairvoyance, clairaudience, levitation and the materialisation of spirit forms, and many other kinds of psychic phenomena that might be named, are facts, attested by trained expert scientific observers, some of whom are personally known to him as men whose testimony on this or any other subject is not to be lightly discounted.

The scientific nature of Spiritualism means that the scientists who have spoken in favour of it or who have embraced it, have done so, not because they wished to believe, or because they have been taught from infancy to believe, but because common sense and experience have compelled them to do so. Nothing can testify more effectively to the power of a movement than this. No other religious body would venture to establish its claims upon so strict a foundation. Perhaps that is why no other can hope to stand so firmly, nor expect, in this analytical age, to flourish so vigorously as

Modern Spiritualism may reasonably hope to do.

In almost every instance where leading personages—particularly scientists—have undertaken to investigate the subject, they have done so in a sceptical spirit. In nearly every case where they have been won over, they had originally combated against it. Their first conviction has almost invariably been that Spiritualism is established upon fraud, and that once the keen eye and shrewd mind of the trained observer be brought to bear upon so-called psychic phenomena, the tricks would be exposed. Nor have these investigators hastily arrived at their conclusions. One of the best proofs of the genuineness of psychic phenomena is in the fact, that those who have most consistently and closely examined them are generally those who have accepted them. Among scientists this is most noticeable. During the great controversy upon the subject which took place in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it was those scientists who had unsparingly investigated, that supported Spiritualism. On the other hand,

those who condemned it were often those who confessed they considered the matter unworthy of their serious attention. This is well shown in some of the replies received by the Dialectical Society when appointing a committee to inquire into the subject. A representative body was sought for, and invitations were sent to several leading scientists to join the committee. The replies of some of them reveal to what an extent the matter had been prejudged, and in consequence how many were totally unprepared to even consider it. Professor Huxley, then at the height of his fame, and the leading agnostic in this country, said: "Supposing the phenomena to be genuine, they do not interest me." Herbert Spencer declared: "I have settled the question in my own mind on *a priori* grounds." It is difficult to understand this attitude on the part of men professedly lovers of truth, and who on other subjects were undoubtedly broad-minded. That this was due, however, to no mere passing mood, but a deeply-rooted aversion, is demonstrated by the repeated attacks against Spiritualism by this type of

person. Even authorities unsympathetic towards Spiritualism have had to acknowledge the unfairness of such critics as Professor Tyndall and Dr. W. B. Carpenter. Tyndall's noteworthy pronouncement that, "The world will have a religion of some kind, even though it should fly to the intellectual whoredom of Spiritualism," sprang from little more than his ignorance of the subject. The remarks of Frank Podmore, an unfavourable critic of Spiritualism, convey a vivid idea of the unscientific methods of the eminent physicist, as well as the bitter manner in which he blindly regarded anything to do with psychic phenomena.

"In his 'Fragments of Science for Unscientific People,'" writes Podmore, "Tyndall furnishes a sample of his mode of investigation. The date of the solitary séance which he describes is not given, but from another source we learn that it took place in the early sixties, at the house of Mr. Newton Crossland. The séance was a failure; nothing occurred which could not have been effected by fraud or accident. Tyndall

claims, however, to have checked one or two intended movements of the table; he further asserts that the medium, after boasting that she was so sensitive as to be rendered seriously ill by the mere presence of a magnet in the room, failed to detect a magnet in Tyndall's pocket, within a few inches of her person; and that some of the company attributed to spirit influence movements and sounds which were actually caused by Tyndall himself. Tyndall's account of the sitting is quite possibly correct, but we have only his word for it, and the fact that at the time he kept his experiments and observations to himself, so as to shut out all possibility of corroborative evidence, gives an appearance of unfairness to his article, which is much to be regretted. As we have already seen, even a distinguished physicist is liable, like ordinary mortals, to make serious mistakes in his report of a séance, and as a matter of fact, Tyndall's version of the evening's performance was challenged, on publication, by his host.

"But even if the accuracy of the narrative is admitted, the propriety of publish-

ing it is dubious. The séance was admittedly unsuccessful; no fraud was actually detected; and it seems hardly worth while to have written an article to prove that some Spiritualists were credulous and some mediums imaginative. But when dogs are to be beaten any stick will serve." *

Although Tyndall and Carpenter belong to the previous generation, their methods are such glaring examples of the unfair criticism to which Spiritualism has always been subjected on the part of persons of whom any such thing is hardly likely to be suspected, that they serve a very useful purpose in connection with this aspect of the subject. Unfortunately, there are a large body of people who take their lead from this kind of critic, without even troubling to investigate for themselves.

Even thinkers of importance who have played a conspicuous and honourable part in progressive thought, and, therefore, to whom the world owes a debt of gratitude, are often thus perniciously influenced.

* "Modern Spiritualism: A History and a Criticism." By Frank Podmore. Vol. II. p. 147.

Mr. Edward Clodd* is one of the most recent examples; for no one acquainted with the love of truth he has hitherto shown, would suppose that his illogical and abusive attack on Spiritualism and some of its scientific exponents has been inspired by personal experience. Only those ignorant of the facts would venture to dispute levitations and other well attested psychic manifestations, on the grounds that they "are defiances of the uniformity of Nature"; or stoop so low as to refer to the testimonies of men far more eminent and qualified than themselves as "mischievous drivel." The assumption contained in such criticism is that Mr. Clodd has exhausted nature, and that not one of her laws is outside his knowledge. The truth is, Mr. Clodd is of the old school, and long-continued modes of thought and belief have hardened his heart, and left practically no room for expansion in certain directions. What is required by this order of sceptic is a course of personal investigation of psychic

*"The Question: 'If a man dies, shall he live again?'" By Edward Clodd.

phenomena, equal to the importance of the issues involved.

Dr. Carpenter's attitude reveals in what bad odour important individuals stood fifty years ago when they ventured to speak in favour of Spiritualism. The kind of stick used against them was not less disreputable than that used against Spiritualists in general. Carpenter claimed to have studied the "higher phenomena of Spiritualism" for more than twelve years. His investigations were certainly not exhaustive, whilst certain classes of psychic phenomena he avoided altogether. He expressly states he refused to attend dark séances, or to have anything to do with phenomena below the table. Some of the more remarkable forms of phenomena, which had quite convinced other scientists, he uncompromisingly attributed to fraud. In attempting to demonstrate this theory he failed miserably. We are indebted to him for the phrase "unconscious cerebration," and by means of it he endeavoured to account for various kinds of psychical manifestations. The way he applied this undoubtedly useful discovery, is often

quite amusing, involving him in difficulties far greater than the one he was endeavouring to solve. By unconscious cerebration, he meant that there were often unconscious actions performed, both physically and mentally, that might lead the investigator to suppose that it was not he but some extraneous entity performing the action or expressing the thought. In applying it to table-tilting and planchette-writing, Carpenter would be to a large extent correct. Spiritualists are, as a rule, quite prepared to admit that under certain circumstances much may influence the phenomena which comes only from the experimenter's own subconsciousness. But how it can explain the movements of objects at a distance from the medium or the materialisation of a spirit form, it is impossible to conceive.

Carpenter's strong aversion to Spiritualism led him to adopt jesuitical means of bringing about its overthrow. He regarded it as a most "mischievous epidemic delusion," compared it to the witchcraft of the seventeenth century, and considered it ought, therefore, to be crushed. The ex-

traordinary vigour with which he pursued this end redounds to his lasting discredit as a scientific observer and critic; being "impaired," says Podmore, "by the extraordinary egotism and malevolence which he displayed." *

The foregoing facts afford an idea of the difficulties against which Modern Spiritualism has had to contend. The very body of opinion which Spiritualists have always most honoured, and from which they have always realised their greatest assistance must come, has far too long been in large part antagonistic. So strong is the belief of the average Spiritualist, that he has actually counted on the enquiries of the scientific expert for support; all he has asked for is a fair trial, knowing that should much of his evidence fail to convince, a certain amount could not fail to do so if honestly dealt with. Subsequent events have justified this view; for although there are still many scientific opponents of the phenomena of Spiritualism, they are simply uninformed

* "Modern Spiritualism," Vol. II. p. 152. By Frank Podmore.

upon the subject. It is now generally acknowledged that there exist certain phenomena, not explicable by known physical and psychological laws. This, of course, does not involve the Spiritualistic explanation of them; but although various explanations other than this have been sought, it has been unavailingly. Various theories cover part of the facts, sometimes a considerable part. The explanations offered by Spiritualism appear, however, to cover them all.

A comparison between the methods of scientists who have attributed psychic phenomena to delusion and fraud, and those who have acknowledged them as demonstrated facts is little short of startling. Even if the charge of credulity against the latter could be substantiated, it must ever be to their credit that they investigated sincerely and in accordance with scientific principle; but the accusation cannot be supported. So careful have they been to guard against the possibility of error, that one frequently looks in vain for a flaw. Time has been to most of them no object, forty

years and even more have sometimes been occupied in this research; and several have not even ventured to express any decided view to account for their experiences until after a quarter of a century of investigation, progress being made slowly from point to point as new experiences and facts have been evolved. Sir William Crookes advanced from absolute unbelief to the admission that his early experiments conclusively established the existence of a new force, in some manner connected with the human organisation, which he called Psychic Force. From that he went on to the assurance that he had frequently witnessed the manifestation of another being who could not be accounted an inhabitant of the terrestrial world. To-day he is a firm believer in spirit communion.

The late Professor Cesare Lombroso, the famous criminologist, commenced by regarding Spiritualism as a species of insanity, and finished over a quarter of a century later by writing one of the most valuable treatises in favour of the subject which before he had so roundly condemned. For

more than twenty-five years this eminent personality investigated before he gave to the world his full decision. He openly confessed how hard it had been for him to accept this view. "If ever there was an individual in the world," he wrote, "opposed to Spiritualism by virtue of scientific education, and, I may say, instinct, I was that person." * He had made it the indefatigable pursuit of almost a lifetime to defend the materialistic theory that the soul is an emanation of the brain, and for years he laughed at the idea of psychic phenomena. He published his book "After Death—What?" in face of his friends rising against him on every side, crying out that by doing so he would ruin an honourable reputation. He did not hesitate for a single moment, feeling it was his predestined end and way and duty to crown his life's work "in the struggle for great ideas by entering the lists for this desperate cause, the most hotly contested and perhaps the most persistently mocked idea of the times." † So convinced

* "After Death—What?" p. 1. By Cesare Lombroso.
† *Vide* Preface, p. v.

was he of the truth of Spiritualism that he asserted the facts relating to one class of phenomena alone, namely, phantoms, are so numerous and so well proved that "their biology and their psychology" can now be constructed.

Sir Oliver Lodge is one of the greatest living scientific exponents of Spiritualism. His history in connection with psychical research is too well-known to need elaboration here. It is the same story of slow and careful investigation, and a gradual winning over from scepticism to belief, culminating in the production of his recent work "Raymond, or Life and Death." No book could show more clearly the firmness of his belief. To deal publicly with family matters that must ever be sacred to the heart of a father who has lost a dearly-loved child, is in itself evidence of the importance in which he holds the matter. The very thought that communications, which from their nature can never be appreciated fully except by those to whom they were given, should meet with the scoffs of unbelievers, could be overridden only by the urgency and ac-

curacy of the subject. "Raymond" marks an important period in the development of psychic research, for it is perhaps the first time that an eminent scientist has ventured to publish a book dealing almost specifically with the more subtle mental forms of mediumship and Spiritualism.

In illustrating the nature of the experiences that have convinced scientists of the truth of Spiritualism, it will be best to quote from one who must be regarded as the pioneer of scientific Spiritualism, and then from his legitimate successor in Great Britain. Sir William Crookes has retired from active scientific work in connection with the subject, whilst Dr. W. J. Crawford is still pursuing his remarkable experiments into the nature of psychic force. Both, it will be observed, deal specially with the physical phenomena. The mental phenomena are not less valuable, although certainly more elusive.

A word may be said first regarding the two forms of psychic phenomena with which the popular mind still largely associates Spiritualism. "Table-tilting" and "spirit-

rappings" have in the past played a conspicuous part in the growth of the movement; but for many years they have given way to other means of communicating with the spirit-world. Although a large amount of ridicule has been levelled at both these forms of mediumship, it cannot be because they are not efficient methods of communication. It has arisen from thoughtlessness or misconception on the part of critics, who are more concerned with the means than the end. There can be nothing foolish about any way of communicating that is suitable to the occasion. Because a dumb person uses the manual alphabet to convey his thoughts, people who know the reason for his doing so are not disposed to laugh at him. Yet merely moving the fingers is in itself foolish. Indeed, in some instances it can be regarded only as a sign of mental weakness. The object with which anything is done is what really counts. If therefore the tilting of a table or rapping sounds prove that an intelligence other than those known to be present is at work, and if they throw light upon the nature and where-

abouts of that intelligence, then table-tilting and spirit-rapping become valuable practices. The mere condemnation of rapping as meaningless, carried to its logical conclusion, would soon deprive mankind of at least one of its most valued possessions. The telegraph is nothing more than a rapping machine. To the uninitiated the faint and apparently erratic taps that can be heard through it have no meaning. But those who understand its functions and who can read the code those raps conform to know that by means of them an important part of the world's affairs are carried on, often of national or international importance. It is not the raps that count; it is what they signify.

In view of this one can appreciate why Mr. William Crookes, as he then was, attached great importance to a thin wooden lath 23¼ inches long, by 1½ inches wide, and ⅜ inch thick, floating in the air without any visible or known means of support except the mysterious psychic force known to emanate from the medium who was present on the occasion, and under severe test

conditions. On another occasion he fitted up an apparatus for experimenting on the alteration in the weight of a body.

"It consisted of a mahogany board, 36 inches long by 9½ inches wide, and 1 inch thick. At each end a strip of mahogany 1½ inches wide was screwed on, forming feet. One end of the board rested on a firm table, whilst the other end was supported by a spring balance hanging from a substantial tripod stand. The balance was fitted with a self-registering index, in such a manner that it would record the maximum weight indicated by the pointer. The apparatus was adjusted so that the mahogany board was horizontal, its foot resting flat on the support. In this position its weight was 3 lbs., as marked by the pointer of the balance." *

The apparatus was arranged in position before Mr. Home (the medium) entered the room. He had not even the object of some of the parts explained to him. The purpose of this apparatus was to see whether it was possible to produce much ef-

* "Researches in Spiritualism." By W. Crookes, F.R.S.

fect upon the spring balance by the medium placing his fingers upon the end farthest from the balance. Mr. Home placed the tips of his fingers lightly on the extreme end of the mahogany board which was resting on the support, whilst Mr. Crookes and a friend sat on each side of it, watching for any effect that might be produced. Almost at once the pointer of the balance was seen to descend, and after a few seconds to rise again. This movement was repeated several times, "as if by successive waves of the Psychic Force." The medium, of his own accord, now took a small hand-bell and a little card match-box, and placed one under each hand, still at the end of the mahogany board, in such a position as still to render it impossible for him to exert any appreciable pressure on the spring balance. Nevertheless, it registered a downward pull of from 3½ lbs. to 6 lbs. The latter being the maximum. Mr. Crookes now stepped upon the table and stood on one foot at the end of the board where Mr. Home's fingers had been, and by exerting the whole weight of his body (140 lbs.) succeeded in depressing

the index only 1½ or 2 lbs. when he jerked up and down. In this way Mr. Crookes demonstrated the existence of the mysterious force which had hitherto been unknown to science.

These experiments do nothing necessarily towards proving the existence of disembodied intelligences. In his series of researches, however, Mr. Crookes had distinct evidence of such existing.

Through the mediumship of Miss Florence Cook he obtained some remarkable examples of materialisation, *i.e.,* the temporary manifestation of a spirit entity in a form corresponding more or less closely with an ordinary human body. In some instances it is impossible to distinguish one from the other. The form that most frequently manifested to Mr. Crookes under test conditions called itself "Katie King." She appeared to be a tall, graceful, handsome, well-proportioned lady, and readily did all in her power to give proof of her separate identity from the medium. The eminent scientist once, when the form of "Katie" was standing before him in the

room, distinctly heard a sobbing, moaning sound proceeding from the medium, behind the curtains, where she was supposed to be sitting. Under the heading of "Spirit-forms," Mr. Crookes refers to the results of a series of private séances Miss Cook devoted exclusively to him and one or two of his friends. During one of these séances Mr. Crookes had the satisfaction of seeing "Katie" and her medium together. Miss Cook was crouching on the ground unconscious, whilst Katie stood close behind her. Never before this séance had Katie appeared to greater perfection. For nearly two hours she walked about the room, conversing familiarly with those present. On several occasions she took Mr. Crookes' arm when walking, conveying to him the impression that it was a living woman by his side "instead of a visitor from the other world."* To assure himself of her substantial nature he asked her permission to clasp her in his arms, thus to verify interesting observations that had been made by an-

* "Researches in Spiritualism," p. 106. By W. Crookes, F.R.S.

other experimenter. Permission was graciously given, and he accordingly did so. Subsequently Mr. Crookes obtained a series of photographs of Katie; each evening there were three or four exposures of plates in five cameras, giving at least fifteen separate pictures of each séance. Altogether he obtained forty-four negatives. One of the most interesting of the pictures is one in which he is standing by the side of Katie. The difference between Katie and her medium was very pronounced. Katie was half a head taller than Miss Cook, and a bigger woman in comparison. In breadth of face she differed essentially in size from her medium. Photography was inadequate to depict the perfect beauty of Katie's face, and words powerless to describe her charm of manner, says Mr. Crookes.

"Round her she made an atmosphere of life;
The very air seemed lighter from her eyes,
They were so soft and beautiful, and rife
With all we can imagine from the skies;
Her overpowering presence made you feel
It would not be idolatry to kneel." *

* "Researches in Spiritualism." By W. Crookes, F.R.S.

Thus he writes of her, expressing at the same time his absolute certainty that Miss Cook and Katie were two separate individuals so far as their bodies were concerned.

"The Reality of Psychic Phenomena," published by W. J. Crawford, D.Sc., in 1916, is the most recent work upon the physical phenomena of Spiritualism by a qualified scientist. Dr. Crawford approached the subject sceptically. The facts proved too much for his scepticism, and he is to-day a confirmed Spiritualist. That conclusion may be derived from the preface of his book, in which he says:

"I do not discuss in this book the question of the identity of the invisible operators" (*i.e.,* the intelligences producing the phenomena). "That is left for another occasion. But in order that there may be no misapprehension, I wish to state explicitly that I am personally satisfied that they are the spirits of human beings who have passed into the Beyond."

The circle with which Dr. Crawford carried out his experiments consisted of seven

members, all of one family. All work was voluntary. One member of the family—Miss Kathleen Goligher—is a medium of outstanding merit, and it was with her most of the personal experiments were made. The special advantages obtained by Dr. Crawford with this circle, are the splendid manner in which the phenomena were under control, and the hearty co-operation of the invisible entities. I can testify from personal experience to this, as on more than one occasion I had the privilege of attending some of Dr. Crawford's experiments. Although the manifestations were purely physical, this was only in the sense that they operated on physical bodies; all through was demonstrated the existence of the invisible operators, who were evidently highly intelligent. The medium was quite conscious during all the experiments, keenly interested in the whole proceedings, and quite enjoyed the séances. The experiments were conducted in a light strong enough to enable all present to see the objects in the room; whilst the tables used for levitations were so situated as to make it quite impossible

for any of the mediums to lift them, even if they could have done so without being detected. The greatest freedom was afforded Dr. Crawford, who spent many hours within the circle and in all places around it. He continually worked under the levitated table and between the levitated table and the medium. Complicated instruments were introduced, and placed below the table, whilst Dr. Crawford often placed his arm and hand in the space between the medium and the table. As a result of these and other precautions and tests, eliminating all possibility of fraud, Dr. Crawford was enabled to confirm the reality of psychic force and discover two of the ways in which it is used by spirit communicators when producing physical phenomena.

The table would be levitated and remain suspended in view of all present without visible support; and so powerful was the force lifting it, that the united efforts of strong men could not depress it. The raps varied in intensity from faint taps to blows resembling those made with a sledge-hammer when vigorously wielded. The least re-

quest of Dr. Crawford's seems to have met with an immediate response, and whenever possible the action produced. Everything within reason appears to have been effectively accomplished. In this way what are known as the "cantilever theory" for levitating the table, and the "rod theory," by means of which the raps were produced, were demonstrated. The book is a revelation of scientific precision and a clear evidence of the existence of invisible beings who intelligently co-operated with Dr. Crawford, evidently as anxious to demonstrate the reality of spiritual communion as any mortal could possibly be.

These spiritual entities had other means of communicating with Dr. Crawford; for sometimes when he desired it the medium would go into trance to allow the entities working with her to talk to him. In another part of this book I give an excellent example of the remarkably evidential nature of the rappings with this medium, establishing spirit identity. Dr. Crawford's book deserves the closest attention of all enquirers and critics of Modern Spiritualism.

CHAPTER II

WHAT SPIRITUALISM TEACHES

After Death—what?; physical limitations; the average man deserves to survive; ignorance of ecclesiastics regarding nature of next life; religious teachings contradictory; efforts of science to deal with question; Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace on Spiritualism; it claims to remove doubt; invisible worlds scientifically probable; extension of five senses; St. Paul; psychic gifts penetrating into spirit-world; Spiritualism does not know all about next life; ethical teachings of Spiritualism; punishments and rewards; low and high spiritual states; spirit-world not unlike earth; Spiritualists "naturalists"; Spiritualism offers logical explanation of next life; spirits naturally desirous of communicating with us.

No subject has occupied the attention of mankind more than that of death. Primitive and civilised man have alike asked the question "After death—what?" and both have endeavoured to answer it to their satisfaction. On the whole, the more advanced the race the less satisfactory to them has been the answer, until to-day an ever increasing number conclude that death means annihilation. The vast and magnificent re-

ligious systems that have from time immemorial flourished and faded away, are merely epitomes of the intense importance which mankind has attached to the subject. The many contradictions they involve are proofs of the difficulties which it presents. It is natural that intelligent self-conscious beings should desire always to live, and that they should regard the possibility of extinction with horror. The struggle for existence among mankind arises from a much deeper law than the wish for physical life alone. This world is far too limited for the average person. Each one feels himself pressing against the margin of his physical life. There is within something too big for time and space. A thousand facts give evidence of this. The body is weak frail stuff, so easily broken and torn to rags; but the soul is often resolute and untouched by these disabilities. The soldiers at the front demonstrate this almost without ceasing. It is the body in the main that hinders them. Marcus Aurelius was right when he spoke of man as a "little soul carrying a corpse;" for is not the body subject to purely me-

chanical and biological laws, whilst the consciousness strives incessantly to live above them! The body must be washed, clothed and fed; is subject to the laws of gravitation. We must carefully watch its welfare and put it to bed when it is tired, even though we may desire an entirely different course. These are plain facts known to all rational people, and they are inextricably involved in this great question of life and death. Rightly or wrongly, they lead us consciously or otherwise to feel this life is insufficient, unsatisfying, and we instinctively long for another chance. Even the ordinary person deserves another chance. The circumstances of life are such that the vast majority of men and women and children get practically no opportunity of developing more than the veriest fraction of their faculties and powers. With the more fortunate it is much the same, for it is merely a matter of degree. The man in the street, unknown as he is to the world at large, is too good to die out at death. He deserves a better opportunity for self-expression than this world affords. Does not

this apply much more to the world's great characters? Why should not Socrates, Plato, Galileo, Kepler and Shakespeare, to mention only a few, be permitted in some other state of existence to continue their researches and exercise their powers still to the advantage of the human race?

Then there are the great demands of friendship and love. The degree to which these entwine themselves into the lives of people is too wonderful to be expressed, and too well known to require it. They are the two virtues which make life worth living; and they are two qualities the complete loss of which would be intolerable, and would mark nature indelibly as uneconomical. One of the principal tasks of religion is to give comfort and assurance to the mourner that death does not end all, and that there is the possibility of meeting those who have gone through its gateway elsewhere. So essential is such a teaching, that its absence would destroy any religion, no matter how powerful it may have been. Whoever has stood by the graveside of a loved one will realise how true this is.

How is it, then, that notwithstanding the naturalness and strength of the hope of survival of bodily death, so many have lost, or are losing, faith in it? It is because the religious authorities know nothing definite about it. They are without any personal knowledge on the subject; they rely solely upon tradition, and tradition is confused, indefinite, and contradictory. Go to any minister of religion and he can do no more than affirm to you his belief in survival. He is so ignorant of the nature of the after-world state that he will either refrain from attempting to describe it, or if he does attempt to do so, he is sure to differ from his colleagues. No wonder, then, that science has undertaken to grapple with the problem. Its message in the main, has been gloomy and uncompromising, but this was before the scientific examination of Spiritualistic phenomena; an investigation of which led Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace to declare that Spiritualism "demonstrates mind without brain, and intelligence disconnected with a material body. It furnishes that proof of a future life for which so many crave, and

for want of which so many live and die in positive disbelief." There can be no doubt that the study proclaims to mankind the existence of another and intelligent world. That is the teaching of Modern Spiritualism; and it is not a mere subjective preference, but an objective fact. Without evidence all the faith in the world could not prove survival. The fact that we have deep yearnings, hopes and ambitions is no guarantee that they will be fulfilled. Just as we came into the world without being consulted, so may we go out of it into nothingness, no matter how we may hate and fear the thought. Is not this the method of reasoning to-day, and is it not perfectly justifiable? Well, Spiritualism claims to be able to remove every doubt; and those who have tested its claims appear satisfied with them.

To the Spiritualist it is a literal truth that spirits walk this earth unseen and unheard by the vast majority of people. No one goes through life uninfluenced by these invisible hosts, who are quite aware of earthly presences. Who are these unseen beings? They are the spirits of the so-called "dead."

Through that great change they have passed to the "higher life." Therefore, Spiritualism teaches there is no death. Nor is the world of spirits a world of shades; it is indeed a more real world than our own. Viewed casually, this seems improbable simply because we are in the habit of regarding things from the point of view of personal experience. What we cannot see, or hear or otherwise cognise through our physical senses, we have difficulty in believing exists at all. The principles of science, however, make it not improbable that there may be even now passing through us and the earth, invisible planets with cities and inhabitants, mountains and oceans, fields, rivers, and various forms of life, though we are quite ignorant of the fact. The beyond is only beyond our senses. With other organs of sense, or even with an extension of those we already have, there might be brought within the scope of our experience hitherto undreamed-of realms. The Spiritualist has found this to be a demonstrable fact. Higher senses do exist among us, and it is largely due to them that Spiritualism exists.

It is common knowledge that the human eye registers only a certain number of ether vibrations. Beyond what has been aptly called our "conscious spectrum," are ether waves of which our eye takes no cognisance. Already science has knowledge of faculties that can extend beyond the commonly known range of our five special senses, although to what extent they are capable of advancing can at present be but indistinctly guessed. There is, furthermore, reason to believe that each person has a larger degree of consciousness than he suspects; that in reality only a portion, or rather, two portions, of his real self manifest normally; namely, the waking and the dream consciousness. With some, the hidden phases of consciousness sometimes pass up into the brain, and thus manifesting, exhibit hitherto unsuspected powers. Visions are then seen, sounds heard, sensations felt, and intellectual and emotional qualities demonstrated that are often far superior to anything experienced during the normal state. These things occur apart altogether from Modern Spiritualism. They are facts of psychol-

ogy, so baffling, that psychology, because of them, cannot at present stand upon solid ground. Before it can be said to be a "natural science," the data must be considered more widely.

— That it is not impossible for a spiritual world to exist around, is shown by the fact that the earth moves through the ether of space. We are, in other words, actually moving among the phenomena of etheric life without apparently displacing them. Indeed, they to some extent conjoin with and aid us; for it is by occasional manifestations of the etheric world that we are enabled to exist at all. Light is an example of this. Electricity and magnetism are further expressions which enable us to live more freely than we otherwise could. Radio-active elements constitute a group of insights into nature which a few years ago were unknown. Therefore, apart altogether from the discoveries of Modern Spiritualism, there are ample reasons for suspecting the existence of a spiritual world. The Spiritualist declares that the existence of this world can be demonstrated in a va-

riety of ways here and now. In one sense, we live in both worlds at the same time, for just as St. Paul taught there are bodies terrestrial and bodies celestial, so does Spiritualism; and just as the great apostle of Christianity declared there are spiritual as well as physical gifts or faculties, so does Modern Spiritualism. As the physical faculties spring from, and are related to, the physical body, the spiritual faculties spring from and are related to the spiritual body.

It is not intended here to do more than briefly refer to the main teachings of Modern Spiritualism in relation to the survival of death. To attempt a larger task would require an extensive and intricate treatise which would necessarily be indefinite, since Spiritualism is, in regard to its philosophical and religious aspects, in its infancy. To a considerable extent, this is also true of the scientific side. Not that much of importance has not been discovered regarding all these phases, but that vast unexplored fields lie before it. To know of the existence of anything is very different from knowing all about it. People see without the least idea

of how they do so. An intimate knowledge of the law of optics, or of the anatomy and physiology of the eye, is not essential to so natural a sense. Spiritualism in one respect may justly claim an analogy with this. No rational person can deny the existence of spiritual intelligences behind the marvellous happenings of the séance room; and no fair-minded person can deny that the evidence proves that those intelligences are what they claim to be—disembodied human beings. Although Spiritualists have a fairly clear idea of the nature of the spirit world, they do not venture to say they know all there is to be known about it. Two such widely different states of matter as that world and this, must involve other great differences, very difficult for us to understand. Among the outstanding things Spiritualism claims to know about the spiritual world are all important ethical facts. For example, Spiritualists declare that life in this sense is taken up in the new world at the point it was broken off here. That is to say, a person is no better nor worse immediately after dying than he was immediately before. The

same laws of mental and spiritual growth await him there as here. If he would *be* good, he must *do* good; if he desires to increase his knowledge, he must continue to strive after it; if he would progress to more spiritual states, he must live more spiritually. The question of punishment and reward according to Spiritualism does not necessarily involve eternity. People who have been very wicked here, suffer in the next world in a remedial and not in a vindictive sense. Perhaps one of the most difficult things the average person experiences in connection with this view of the subject is this idea of punishment. We have been so habituated to the notion of eternal punishment of a uniform type, that unjust as this must be, it makes it hard to appreciate a more just view. Spiritualism maintains that the main factor is an interior one. The defaulting spirit sooner or later awakens to a realisation of his misdeeds, and as this consciousness grows, so deepens the sense of remorse. Only those who have experienced the tremendous pain of a racking conscience will understand the force and poign-

ancy of this mode of punishment. In addition, however, there are states or planes to which wrongdoers pass coinciding with their demerits, and comparable to the conception of Purgatory. In them the process is one of purifying, and until that has been fully accomplished, they cannot hope to pass to higher and happier conditions.

The average individual is not bad enough to go to these unhappy states, nor good enough to go to very high ones. He passes into a world not unlike this one in its general arrangement. There he lives a perfectly rational life among scenes and people he can appreciate and love. Even if this were not true, it certainly seems quite natural that it should be true. What could be more reactionary and uneconomical than for men and women and children to pass from one state of existence to another totally unlike it? Especially one in which the whole of the principles of conduct and growth were changed. It would mean that all they had learned in their previous life would be utterly wasted and without meaning; all the trials, disappointments, and successes that

distinguish every life on earth would be without purpose, meaningless, sheer waste. It is impossible to conceive nature breaking down in so unaccountable a way. If these facts are borne in mind, it will be seen that instead of the Spiritualist being a "credulous supernaturalist," ready to believe any foolish thing purporting to come from the "spirits," that he is really a "naturalist," and an extremely sensible one at that. Compare these beliefs with those currently taught on religion, or with the total disbelief of the materialist, or with the blank ignorance of the agnostic, and they will be observed to be the only rational explanation offered on this important but perplexing subject.

One of the advantages the inhabitants of the spirit world have over ourselves is their knowledge of the existence of the earth. In this respect they are much better situated in regard to us than are we in regard to them. They know of our existence; we, in the main, only suspect theirs. It is natural they should feel a keen interest in a place where they have so many interests, and

which for a time was their sole abode. Nothing would be more unlikely than that a departed mother should forget her children and no longer desire to see them, or to be with them; a husband his wife; or a child its parents. They would, we might well suppose, endeavour to communicate in some way with the objects of their affections, even if it were beyond their power to do so successfully. An idea of their feelings may be gathered from our own. What greater solace could a bereaved person have than to know that the one he mourns still lives, is happy, that one day they will be reunited, and that even now from time to time the departed one can communicate these and other facts? And what greater pleasure could the departed experience than to be able to gratify this legitimate desire for knowledge? Death would then appear to be merely a journey to a not very distant land. That is just what Spiritualism claims as its most special discovery. For, although desperately wicked people suffer, and are even denied the opportunity of holding intercourse with the world, the average spirit

is so happy that, notwithstanding the ties he has on earth, he would not return to it permanently if he could. We can now see why it is that in perhaps every form of communion with the earth, the spirit world plays the leading part. It is the spirit people who manifest to the clairvoyant, speak to the clairaudient, control the automatist's hand, and materialise. No greater error prevails than that Spiritualists call the spirits up. Whoever undertakes to investigate will soon see the folly of this notion. The departed are far more anxious to communicate with us than we with them. They soon realise they are "more alive than ever," and yet see their friends mourning them as dead; probably as lying in the grave or residing in some equally uncomfortable place; or else totally ignorant of what has become of them, whilst all the time they are alive and happy except for the knowledge of their friends' mistaken view.

"Yea! while I found all wisdom (being dead)
They grieved for me. I should have grieved for them!"

The origin of Modern Spiritualism well illustrates this fact.

CHAPTER III

WHAT SPIRITUALISM TEACHES—*continued.*

Origin of Modern Spiritualism; Fox family; development of many different means of psychic communion; what a medium is; psychic force in physical and mental phenomena; substance of physical body also used; Miss Goligher, Eusapia Paladino and Mme. d'Esperance; mediums cannot control the phenomena; spirit communion difficult; establishing identity; to what extent mediums may be developed; gift of mediumship varies greatly; mediumship not a morbid state; mediumship a form of genius; Spiritualism without class distinction; no priests; mediumship a natural gift; how to investigate; the "home circle"; "negatives" and "positives"; mediumship subject to natural laws; how sceptics may "sit"; dangers; no devils nor angels.

THE opening scene of Modern Spiritualism's eventful history is dramatic in its simplicity. In Arcadia, a township in Wayne County, New York, there lived John D. Fox, a farmer, with his family. They were Methodists by conviction. In addition to himself and his wife, Mr. Fox's household consisted of two daughters, aged twelve and

fifteen respectively. There was also a married son and a married daughter living elsewhere. On the evening of March the 31st, 1848, when the two girls, who occupied the same bed, were about to retire, the household was disturbed by some mysterious rappings. This had happened before. On this occasion, however, one of the girls challenged them, and to their astonishment, the raps replied! They repeated sound for sound the noises made by one of the girls snapping her fingers, and again and again gave the exact number of raps asked for. The listeners—including the parents—soon realised this was an event of no ordinary moment. They called in friends and neighbours that they too might bear witness. Needless to say, the neighbours were disposed to ridicule the idea that there was anything unusual about these raps. One gentleman, to whom we are indebted for a carefully-written account of what occurred in his presence that night, laughed at Mrs. Fox, told her it was all nonsense and could be easily accounted for. Later, hearing them, he altered his opinion. In the pres-

ence of the neighbours, questions were asked by him, and the rappings were heard responding with sufficient force to cause the bedstead to jar as the sound was produced. A code was arranged, and soon a number of questions were correctly answered. Among other things, the correct ages of those present were given, although in most instances they were known only to the individual concerned. The number of children in the different families in the neighbourhood were also correctly stated, even the number of boys and girls in each case. The invisible rapper declared he was the spirit of a cobbler who had been murdered some years before in the house and buried under the floor. Subsequent enquiry tended to confirm this statement.

There was no doubt the rappings were caused by no human means. Within the next few days, hundreds of people were attracted to the spot, and what they witnessed or heard, gave rise to serious considerations. A curious thing now happened. Wherever the two young girls—Catherine and Margaretta Fox—went, the rappings followed

them, increased in volume, and spread to others. Mrs. Fish, the married daughter of Mr. Fox, and several inmates of a boarding-house in Auban, where the younger sister stayed, also became mediums. The rappings spread rapidly throughout the eastern states. In one place alone—Syracuse—some two hundred rapping mediums developed in a very short time.

The faculty for rapping mediumship seems to have been possessed by nearly all the Fox family. Leah and Kate appear to have had the gift in the greatest degree. The records published by capable witnesses show the remarkable vigour of the gift among them. No situation appears to have been too difficult in which to exercise it. Direct evidence was in this way received on numerous occasions, establishing the identity of deceased people who could not possibly have been known to the mediums.

The anxiety shown here of the spirit world to communicate with this is typical of what has occurred ever since. One of the principal rules of the séance room is, "Keep your mind open, ready to *receive* whatever comes

at its proper value, but don't *dictate what shall happen,* although within reason you may dictate *how* it shall happen." One of the commonest experiences of inquirers is that they do not always receive communications from those they specially wish to; and very often the least expected spirit may turn up.

Since the advent of Modern Spiritualism, the means by which spirit intercourse is attained has grown in a remarkable way. Many new methods superior to the original rappings have come into vogue, some of them being related directly to the mind of the medium. In every instance, as far as can at present be judged, a human organism is essential to the exercise of all these methods; even when the phenomena are objective to the medium. Recent experiments, however, appear to point to the possibility of being able to dispense with the human element in favour of a purely mechanical device; but up till now nothing definite has been arrived at.

A medium may be described as a "go between" the two worlds, a sort of psychic

bridge; and just as certain kinds of material are required for ordinary bridges, so are they necessary for this kind. This material is the mysterious Psychic Force. It is needed for all forms of mediumship, although varying in nature and degree according to the character of the psychic's gifts. In physical phenomena it is much more in evidence than in mental phenomena. All kinds of explanations have been offered; but none seems to cover all the facts relating to it. All are more or less agreed that in cases of physical phenomena—such as levitation and materialisations—some fluid emanates from the body of the medium to produce them; but whether it is a nervous fluid or one of a more material nature, seems never to have been agreed upon. The recent experiments of Dr. W. J. Crawford, however, seem definitely to prove that it is partly of a physical nature—the substance of the medium's body. Scientists have frequently photographed it proceeding from psychics, and there appear to be certain parts of the human organism from or through which it is more easily extracted.

Nevertheless, it appears to be based upon a substratum of matter far more refined than the physical body, and which apparently belongs to the psychic body of the medium. No doubt it involves several degrees of matter, of the nature of some of which we are at present ignorant, and which may, because of their transcendental nature, be never fully understood in this world. The extent to which certain psychic phenomena draw upon the substance of the medium's body is amazing, and if we were not able to rely upon the testimonies of eminent scientists, it would be quite impossible to believe what really happens. In the case of Miss Goligher we have distinct reductions in her weight during the manifestations. The same applies to the Italian medium, Eusapia Paladino; whilst in other instances, especially that of Mme. d'Esperance, the entire physical body of the medium has been known to disappear during materialisations.

In Mental forms of mediumship, such as clairvoyance, less psychic force is used, probably because the medium is able to exercise a faculty or sense comparable with

the ordinary power of vision. With few exceptions—and even these are doubtful—psychics are quite unable to make and control the phenomena. All they can do is to place themselves in the state which renders them possible. Sometimes the manifestations occur unexpectedly, but seldom with the psychic who has cultivated his gifts carefully. A special purpose and effort are then nearly always required. Even clairvoyants are subject to this, and unable to see spirit forms unless they try to by putting themselves in the necessary condition, and unless the spirit people undertake to manifest. Then they cannot help seeing spiritually any more than one can avoid doing so physically when one's eyes are opened in the light. The employment of psychic powers is therefore mainly dependent upon the unseen entities. It follows that mediums do not see into the spirit world, or otherwise communicate directly with it with the same freedom and consistency that they do with their own world. A great deal depends upon the realisation of this. Spiritualists have long been misrepresented as teaching that com-

munion with the spirit world is an easy matter; and mediums as making the claim that they can compel the spirits to come to them, or even go and fetch them because they have free access to the superior state. Spiritualism really contends that the more correct way is to say that the spirit people communicate with us; and that once they have a fitting instrument for this purpose, they adapt it carefully to the end in view. In almost every instance, it requires considerable knowledge and skill on their part to do this. They "build down," as it were, towards this earth. In materialisations they actually "build on to the earth." Seldom are they seen in their natural spiritual state. When manifesting to or through mediums, their main object is to give evidence of their identity, and to do so they are compelled to adopt a form that is likely to be recognised by those whom they specially wish to be aware of their presence. Herein is the explanation why the average clairvoyant description depicts the dead as appearing in earthly-looking garments, and to all intents and purpose with the infirmities

and personal faults and foibles that distinguished them when in earth life. Short-sighted people who have failed to see this reason have pooh-poohed the idea on the grounds that tall hats and Paisley shawls cannot have souls, and, therefore, as the manifestation of these things is ridiculous, so must the whole affair be. Let it be put in this way: Suppose your grandmother, who died at an advanced age, was described by a clairvoyant as a young and beautiful creature with none of the marks of old age and infirmities that afflicted her before she died. Suppose that instead of the old mob cap and the shawl she habitually wore, she was said to be dressed in flowing garments of the purest white; what meaning would it have for you? None whatever. You might be glad to think such a wonderful and delightful change could take place in the old lady; but its test value to you as evidence of her continued existence would be *nil.* Even if from her were elicited certain facts of which you were aware she alone knew, their value would be destroyed as evidence of her identity, because of the dissimilarity

between the description given of her and that of your grandmother. Now, suppose your grandmother could communicate with you from the other world, and that she, knowing this, endeavoured to do so. What more reasonable method could she adopt than to appear as you would best remember her? This would necessitate her conjuring up images corresponding to the various objects by which she knew you would recognise her. That is exactly what Spiritualism teaches she does.

Although there are comparatively few qualified mediums, no one knows to what extent the power may be developed. Modern Spiritualism is quite a modern movement, and has attracted in a practical way but slight attention. In all probability, the majority of mankind possess one or other of these gifts in a latent condition. The question is whether it is in every case sufficiently good to repay the effort necessary to its unfoldment. As a rule, it varies greatly with the same person. This is one of the difficulties against which all investigators have to contend. It is certainly not a mor-

bid state. Nearly all the most famous mediums have been in all other respects quite normal, their mediumship being quite contingent. Although they are generally keen-witted, lucid and capable, neither the physical nor the mental state seems to have much to do with the gift, excepting perhaps in the case of clairvoyance and the ability to receive impressions, *i.e.,* thoughts and sensations from the spirit world; and then it is only temporary, the mind needing to be in a state of restfulness. Mediumship, in its highest degree, is comparable with genius. The marvellous things it is able to accomplish and the heights of spiritual insight it sometimes attains, are not inferior to some of the greatest achievements of those remarkable men and women whom we have come to regard as superior to their fellows, if erratic in their ways.

There is a marked difference between the way in which Spiritualism endeavours to spread its beliefs and the method adopted by other religions. The custom of nearly all institutions is to specialise and keep the control of affairs in a few hands. In con-

nection with religion, this has invariably developed into priestcraft; a special education and ordainment and a distinctive mode of dress, making the dispensers of spiritual benefits a class apart. Whether rightly or wrongly, the public taste no longer runs that way. Priests are but men after all; and since they are unable to substantiate their special claims, they are not likely to be seriously regarded. Spiritualism, on the other hand, makes no such distinction between people and the attainment of truth. Mediums, certainly, stand in a sense apart from the ordinary person, but simply because they prove their claims, and they differ only because of them. They can claim no special virtue. Nature has for some unaccountable reason presented them with valuable gifts; but so has she others. Some people have naturally great memories or fine voices. We admire them for it, but do not reverence them. If anything deserves that, it is surely the Creator and Presenter of those gifts. This is precisely the view of Spiritualism. For aught that is known, half the world may become mediumistic; and if the world is in-

terested in the cultivation of the power, it can undertake the task without the aid of any specially ordained person, and in their own homes. Two things, however, are necessary—a knowledge how to proceed and sincerity of purpose. The former can be easily obtained by a brief study of the literature upon the subject. The latter is entirely personal. In a way, the "home circle" is the Spiritualists' spiritual laboratory; in another it is their temple. This is one of the oldest means of spiritual communion, long antedating Modern Spiritualism. As with the ancient Romans, the true altar of worship may be in the chief living room in the house; for there, above all other places, may we suppose our departed friends and relations will find best those conditions enabling them to prove their continued love and interest in those who dwell on earth.

More psychic force is generally required for successful spirit intercourse than the medium possesses. At any rate, it is well known that each person taking part in the séance in some way modifies the phenomena, usually by contributing a small amount to

the psychic power required. Sometimes the effect is quite harmful, retarding the manifestation. This may arise from the peculiar psychic make-up of the sitter, or from the fact that the séance is not properly arranged. The best way to supply good conditions is by forming a circle. It is not indispensable, however, although never, apparently, harmful.

Psychic force is subject to laws analogous in some respects to electricity. It varies with the sexes, usually being "negative" with females and "positive" with males. This, again, is not invariable, whilst it must be understood that the terms "negative" and "positive" are merely meant to describe differences rather than to explain them.

Ignorant people have not hesitated to ridicule the idea of a circle, asking of what use is it. But that is the inevitable criticism levelled at any new science. Galileo's telescope and almost every other valuable scientific discovery has met the same fate. The proper answer is that nature demands it, and what nature demands must be supplied

or the phenomena, be it what it may, will be denied us. Extensive experience has long justified the value of the Spiritualistic circle. As Spiritualism among its most devout followers is a religion, they open all circles with an invocation to God, and occasionally throughout the proceedings sing hymns or have appropriate music played. Music is a valuable aid to all psychic phenomena. The vibrations thus set up are said to be greatly beneficial to the spirit entities when moulding the psychic force or otherwise using it. At the beginning of the circle it is wise for all present to clasp hands, placing the right hand over their neighbour's left, thus forming an endless chain. From one to two hours is usually long enough to sit, after which the meeting should be broken up with a benediction. This, it should be remembered, is the spiritual method. It is impossible that sceptics would care for the devotional part. It may also be investigated in this manner from a purely scientific point of view, when all but the devout part may be retained.

Is there any danger in Spiritualism? If

by that is meant are there devils, the answer must be, No—at least, so far as the discoveries of Modern Spiritualists and other psychic investigators have up to the present gone. Strangely enough, this is one of the gravest difficulties Spiritualism has had to meet in regard to certain religious people. There is always opposition against discoveries which fail to support old established creeds and opinions. Just as spirit is the last thing the materialist will acknowledge, so many people object to the explanation of an after-life that leaves out the unpleasant bogies they were taught in childhood to believe constitute the most active inhabitants of the unseen world. The very denial of this pet idea is sufficient to bring Spiritualism into disrepute as actually holding intercourse with devils and even aiding them in their nefarious work! These are the people who declare Spiritualism is a form of diabolism: that spirit possession and diabolical possession are the same thing. No better answer can be given than that of Mr. F. W. H. Myers, one of the greatest authorities on Spiritualism and psychic phenom-

ena:—"I know of no evidence—reaching in any way our habitual standard, either for angelic, for diabolical, or for hostile possession." * After many years of the closest investigation and severest criticism, Mr. Myers concluded that, apart from subconscious action and fraud, we have "to deal only with spirits who have been men like ourselves."

There must long be a great deal of difference between what the public expect and what the experimenter discovers. If the phenomena of Spiritualism are carefully and intelligently investigated, there is no danger whatever. No more danger attaches to it than to any other branch of science. Reasonableness is all that is required to assure a safe passage, and the attainment of invaluable knowledge.

* F. W. H. Myers' "Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death." Vol. II. p. 198.

CHAPTER IV

WHY I BECAME A SPIRITUALIST

From scepticism to belief; common sense as a guide; facts compelled belief; fifteen years' intimate acquaintance with subject; have sat with many famous mediums; the case of Sidney; cross-correspondence; "Harry Thompson"; the Hanley and Southsea incident; Lombroso's mother materialises over twenty times; a materialisation; "Robert Farell"; evidential value of small things; my father communicates with me; blowing kisses; the case of L——.

As the principal object of this book is to convey to "the man in the street" an idea of what Spiritualism is, an account of a few of the experiences which have befallen one who has passed from scepticism to belief may not be without interest. I lay claim to no special qualifications for discerning the true from the false in anything. Common sense has always been my guide; and, since that is the particular quality upon which the general affairs of mankind are run, I must be content to stand or fall with them.

To believe in spirit communion was never a special wish of mine. At one time, indeed, I bitterly opposed the idea. It is reason alone that has compelled me to change my course: to have done otherwise under the circumstances would have been ridiculous and false to myself and the facts.

For fifteen years I have been more or less intimate with Spiritualism and Spiritualists in all parts of the British Isles. During the last ten years the main portion of my life has been in direct touch with this movement. I have taken part in many hundreds of séances of various kinds; and have witnessed—in the presence of some of the finest mediums of Europe, America and Australia, and through my own psychic powers—most astounding proofs of the survival of bodily death. In all but a few of these séances, my presence has been that of a friend, or by special invitation, no money whatever being demanded of me. It is necessary to make this perfectly clear, as there is a strong inclination for critics to doubt anything professional in this respect: why this should be is not altogether easy to explain. Doctors,

lawyers, musicians, poets, politicians, clergymen, are not less honoured and trusted because they draw stipends. The medium, however, is anathematised for putting a monetary value on his services. Be that as it may, like Mark Antony at the burial of Cæsar, I must speak of mediums as I have found them. Fee or no fee, the evidence—as you, reader, shall have occasion to judge—has been conclusive.

It is impossible to do more than select a few out of my many psychic experiences. They are not more convincing than a great many I must leave unrecounted. My selection will be carefully drawn from different kinds of psychic phenomena, so as to show how each may be equally evidential.

One of the first incidents that tended to convince me there was something more in Spiritualism than mere trickery or delusion, was connected closely with my family. A brother of mine who had volunteered for the South African War, came home after the campaign suffering from a serious chest trouble. In course of time it proved too much for the family doctor, who advised him

to consult a specialist. When it was discovered that his illness would be very protracted, he entered as an "in patient" in one of the large London general hospitals. Although he grew gradually worse, the idea of his death was not for a long time entertained, as nobody seemed quite aware of the nature of his complaint, and youth and hope were on his side.

At his instigation, my mother—practically a stranger to Spiritualism—took a pocket handkerchief of his to a medium for psychometrical purposes (*i.e.,* by holding the article the "sensitive" gets "in touch" with the owner, and can frequently describe much to do with him, both past and to come; as well as describe spirit forms often connected with and recognisable by him).

To make quite sure that nothing unreliable should interfere with the fulfilment of this request, the handkerchief was taken to a psychic who was totally blind, having no eyes. On three occasions the interviews were without success; but on the fourth the results were marvellously accurate. An excellent description was given of the sick man

and his whereabouts. The nature of his complaint was correctly diagnosed, and with it the disheartening assertion that he could not recover. Then came the most striking part of the reading. The medium stated that my brother would pass away on either the 22nd or 23rd of February of the following year. She was uncertain which would be the date, as both impressed her with equal force. This statement was made in October, 1903. On the evening of February 23rd, 1904, my mother received the following letter:

"Mark Ward,
"S.B. 11.
"Feb. 23rd.

"DEAR MRS. LEAF,

"Poor Sidney passed away quite suddenly at 1.15 a.m. He had had a very bad attack of breathing about 11" (p.m. 22nd), "the worst he had had, and he said how thankful he was that he was in the hospital, as you would have been so frightened. The end came very peacefully, and we can only say thank God he was spared any more suffering. "SISTER MARK."

If the act of dying began with the bad attack of breathing on the 22nd February, my brother's death at 1.15 a.m. the following morning, includes both dates, and confirms in a remarkable manner the clairvoyante's prediction.

What is known as "cross correspondence" is regarded by authorities as an almost ideal method of establishing identity. I have experienced several instances, of which the following are excellent examples. The first will convey an idea of the difficulties of getting tests of identity always verified, for not very often are circumstances likely to fall as favourably as in this instance. A spirit purported to control a medium in my presence, giving his name as "Harry Thompson." Among other things, he assured me that although I had never known him in earth life, he was, nevertheless, deeply interested in my welfare, and would render me all the service in his power. Needless to say, there was not an iota of evidence for survival in this; and had the matter remained there I might well have been in doubt as to whether "Harry Thomp-

son" was really an entity apart from the individuality of the medium or not. My doubts, however, were set at rest seven years later; for at that time I received a letter from a relation who had been many years resident in America, and with whom I rarely communicated and practically never discussed my affairs. In it he informed me that he had become interested in Spiritualism, and had been attending séances in Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. Among much of an evidential nature there had happened to him one incident which he wished to refer to me for confirmation. At one of these séances a spirit had manifested giving the name of "Harry Thompson," who declared he had already made himself known to me and was anxious for my brother to tell me so.

On another occasion, during a visit to Hanley, Staffordshire, I received an invitation to sit with a well-known clairvoyante, who, during entrancement, gave me a message supposed to come from an acquaintance of mine who had recently died. The evidence of his identity was convincing; but

the message was so unexpected and remarkable that my confidence was shaken. On arriving in London two days later, a letter was awaiting me from a town in the South of England, considerably more than two hundred miles distant from Hanley, giving precisely the same message purporting to come from the same spirit—christian and surname being accurately stated. Upon enquiring of the writer of the letter—who must have been totally unacquainted with my movements at the time—how this came about, it turned out that he was attending a séance with a very different kind of medium in Southsea within a few hours of my sitting at Hanley, when this same spirit came with the same message for me.

I do not purpose mentioning what I deem my most marvellous experience of psychic phenomena, because it would probably be quite beyond the power of the enquirer or the neophyte to believe it. Suffice it to say, that incidents happen in the séance-room outdoing for marvellousness even such legends as the "Arabian Nights' Entertainment." Some of the testimonies of scien-

tific observers prove this. My next story has a certain spice of humour in it. It certainly left the sitters unconvinced until it was unexpectedly confirmed.

It happened in June, 1915, in the house of Dr. W. J. Crawford, during one of his experimental séances with his remarkable circle of mediums. There were the usual demonstrations of psychic force for which this "circle" is famous, including the levitation of physical objects. It was held in light, thus enabling all present to see the whole of the proceedings; full opportunity having been afforded me to inspect the apparatus and arrangement of the circle before and even after the séance commenced. The usual taps and thuds were heard, and then, by request, the unseen operators imitated very cleverly various peculiar sounds, such as are caused when sawing wood and bouncing a ball. Dr. Crawford then suggested that we should see whether we could obtain evidence of identity from any spirits who might be present. The raps immediately signified approval.

In answer to a question put by myself, it

was stated by the raps that someone was present desirous of communicating facts about himself. It was agreed that the invisible communicators should rap at the correct letters forming the words they wished to convey as one of the sitters slowly repeated the alphabet. In this way the name "Robert Farell" was spelt out. As no one present knew any such person, he was asked to signify with whom he wished to communicate. It was with myself. I informed him that I was quite unacquainted with anyone of that name, but the raps conveyed the information that he was known to a friend of mine whose name he mentioned. As the gentleman referred to had a rather distinctive and honourable profession, I wondered if "Robert Farell" could tell me what it was. He readily proved he could.

Thinking that perhaps "Robert Farell" had been a member of the same profession, I invited him to tell me what particular occupation he had followed when on earth. This, to the astonishment of all present, he peremptorily refused to do. All thought this very singular, as there appeared to be no rea-

son why that should not be rapped out as well as the particulars already received. There was certainly no lack of psychic power as subsequent phenomena proved; but every effort to obtain the desired information met with so decided a rebuff that we at last desisted, feeling the value of the test had been greatly impaired.

The next day I wrote my friend a letter in which I mentioned the séance and that the name Robert Farell had been given as known to him. Nothing however was said about the failure to obtain information of the spirit's earthly profession. A few weeks later, my friend, who had been staying at a South Coast holiday resort, visited me in London. As he had not answered my letter about Robert Farell, I mentioned the matter to him again. He admitted he and his brother had known a gentleman of that name some forty years ago in London; but I observed a strong disinclination on his part to talk about the subject. At last he said, "Robert Farell was quite a notorious character in the district, and I only knew him as a neighbour. I saw him many times,

but have no wish to talk about him." I told him that "Farell" knew his profession. My friend agreed that he undoubtedly did. I then commenced to tell him that I had asked "Farell" what his particular profession was. "He refused to tell you that, I expect," interrupted my friend. "Yes; but why?" "Well, I expect because he was a professional thief!" *

There are three probable reasons why the name of Robert Farell's profession should be refused. First, that he was ashamed of his past life. Secondly, that as he was known to my friend only by repute and as a neighbour, he did not wish to convey the impression that friends of mine had been in any way associated with questionable characters. Thirdly, because he did not wish to upset the sitters, some of whom, being new to the subject of Spiritualism, might form a wrong idea of it. Thus what appeared to detract from the value of the test, really added point and interest to it.

The value of small things for the establishment of identity is now generally under-

* "The Two Worlds," Vol. 28, p. 506, 1915.

stood. A small mole or indelible mark on some particular part of a person's body is far more likely to lead to their identification than a general description of their appearance. It is the same with psychic identification. A grandfather of mine was once described by a clairvoyante very accurately; but after all, it was not conclusive, since many people were like him in a general way. When, however, the medium said he was in the habit of standing with his left knee bent, and that he attracted her attention to it by slowly rubbing it, there was much less room for doubt. My grandfather had seriously injured his left knee several years before he died, and ever after, when he stood still he kept the knee bent, and often rubbed it in the manner described. Here the small thing counted. Before my father's decease we used to say he was a "Spiritualist up to a point," for a reason known only to his family. In the autumn of 1917, he purported to speak with me in the "direct" voice, that is, independently of the medium's organism, and so loudly and naturally that all present could hear him. The medium knew nothing

about my father, the towns in which they lived being four hundred miles apart. After the voice had been speaking some time, one of the sitters vouchsafed the remark that my father must have been a good Spiritualist. I replied that he had been. Immediately the voice said: "Up to a point." That brief sentence was far more evidential than his full name, and many other notable facts. It was a small thing, but it counted. I once met a bereaved father at a trumpet séance (*i.e.,* where the direct voice is produced, and a metal trumpet used to concentrate the sound waves in the direction of the person to whom the voice wishes to speak) express his belief that his little son had communicated with him because of the manner in which he "blew kisses" to him. It had been the little boy's habit when on earth to give the kisses in bunches, as it were, and then blow them in the same way afterwards. He did precisely the same thing through the trumpet. Had each kiss been blown separately it could hardly have been his child.

There are probably not more than a dozen trumpet mediums in Great Britain at the

present time. Six years ago there appear to have been none. This is a new but very satisfactory means of spirit-communion. It gives at least as good evidence that one speaks with one's "dead" friends, as the telephone does regarding those living. An idea of the splendidly evidential nature of communications received in this way can be obtained by reading "The Voices," by Vice-Admiral Usborne Moore.

In many respects it is superior to almost all other forms of psychic phenomena, and through it I have received many excellent tests, of which the following is an example:

Four years ago I lost a brother-in-law, an agnostic. We had often discussed the subject of Spiritualism, and as he was sceptical, he had formed an opinion of what he regarded as necessary to constitute a satisfactory test of survival. It, he maintained, must be information not known to the sitter, nor to any other person but the one professing to communicate. The value of psychic evidence must always, he thought, be determined by what the sitter knew, especially by what was consciously in his mind at the time

of the supposed communication. Thus, if the name of a deceased person were in his thoughts, the fact that that name was mentioned would not constitute evidence, as the medium might have consciously or unconsciously read it telepathically. If something was said that the sitter knew, but was not at the moment thinking about, but of something else, then its evidential value would be increased. Should, however, anything be told quite unknown to the recipient and afterwards verified, that might be regarded as conclusive. It is necessary to remark that my brother-in-law was well read and above the average in intellectual qualifications. He died when quite a young man, after having been an invalid throughout the whole of his life.

Shortly after his death I sat by invitation with a well-known "voice medium," who knew nothing about my brother-in-law. Being an only son and much loved by his parents, his mother had taken his decease sadly to heart; and, although nothing was ever said by her on the matter, there was no doubt she was worried by her son's un-

belief. During the "voice" séance the trumpet approached me, and I recognised L——'s voice saying anxiously: "Tell my mother I am living, and not dead. Tell my mother I am living." Instantly his full name came to my mind, and filled it to the exclusion of all else. I, therefore, forgetting all we had said on the subject of Spiritualism, asked him to tell me his name. Instead of which, he said to me: "Do you remember the photographs you had taken last Christmas?" For the moment I did not, until he remarked: "Yes, you do; you gave my sister one." That brought the incident to my mind. The previous Christmas I had had my photograph taken by request, and I had given one to his sister, and at that moment it must have been reclining on her mantel-shelf several miles away.

"Yes, I remember now. But what is your name?" I asked.

"Do you know," was the evasive reply, "that I died of internal hæmorrhage?"

Now, the doctor attributed his death to heart-failure; but, upon consideration, hæmorrhage was much the likelier cause.

He had taken no solid food for over a month and was greatly reduced in strength. Several times he had been warned against subjecting himself to an internal strain, as it might be fatal. He disobeyed, fell back, and expired immediately. The value of this remark rests in his informing me of what was probably true, although it had never entered my thoughts. After much other talk of this kind, the voice suddenly said to me:

"Do you know I have a watch and chain?"

"No."

"Well, I have; the chain is in my mother's house, upstairs in a drawer."

Here was a splendid point. L——, who had always been rather immaculate in his dress, had never to my knowledge worn a watch and chain. This I had observed with surprise, although I had never enquired the reason for it.

After the séance I went directly to L——'s sister and asked her whether she knew anything about his watch and chain. She did not. At my earnest request she went to her mother, who lived the other side of

London, specially bearing in mind that if a watch and chain of her brother's were not known to exist, they were to search for them. Nothing was said by me as to their probable whereabouts. The result was, that by diligently searching, a chain of L——'s, which had been long forgotten, was found in a drawer in the bedroom L—— had occupied upstairs. The watch—of the whereabouts of which the voice had said nothing —was discovered in a small box, also upstairs.

When these facts are compared with my brother-in-law's conception of a reliable test for the survival of identity, the proof, I think, is complete, even if I had not recognised his voice and mannerisms.

There has always been a particular charm about materialisation, and perhaps this form of psychic-phenomena has done more than any other to convince sceptics that there is a life after death. The experience of Sir William Crookes with Katie King is only one of many similar experiences by equally reliable authorities. Lombroso affirms that his mother materialised at least twenty

times to him during his séances with Eusapia Paladino, and she would say: "'My son, my treasure!' Kissing my head and lips with her lips."* After such unimpeachable testimony I may unhesitatingly mention one—by no means the best—of my experiences of this kind of manifestation.

The séance was held in the house of a friend, and was of the "dark" variety. The exclusion of light undoubtedly weakens the value of the tests received, unless they are unusually good. On this occasion a brother of mine, who was investigating with me, sat on one side of the table, directly opposite me, the medium being held securely by the hands by two of the sitters some distance away. Visibility was obtained by the means usually adopted at this kind of séance, namely, by a phosphorescent slate being placed on the table for the manifesting forms to lift and hold close to their faces, the light given forth by the slate being sufficiently strong to reveal the features satisfactorily.

A mutual friend of my brother's and mine who had passed away about three years be-

*"After Death—What?" By Cesare Lombroso, pp. 68-9.

fore, and who was absolutely unknown to anyone present beside ourselves, made a convincing manifestation by showing himself to each of us separately, his face bearing unmistakable evidences of his identity. The complaint from which he died had caused his neck to swell in a peculiar manner, whilst he had badly broken his nose through an accident several years before his decease. Apart from other points, these two were most obvious when he manifested, so as to leave no room for doubt as to his identification.

CHAPTER V

AUTHENTICATED CASES OF SPIRIT COMMUNICATIONS

Number very great; efforts to destroy their evidential value fail; "Abraham Florentine"; Dr. Venzano's experience; Mrs. Piper's mediumship; "The Greek message"; George Pelham; the "Honolulu" incident of Raymond Lodge; communications of exalted character often received.

So great is the number of well-attested cases of spirit-communion, that considerable difficulty is experienced in selecting the best from among them. Where identity has thus been successfully established the value may be said to be equal, although the circumstances may vary considerably, and, consequently, some instances may appear more attractive than others. The literature of Spiritualism and psychical research is literally replete with examples, and they are being added to daily. Every effort to account for them by non-Spiritualistic theories fails because they cannot cover all the facts. Very often, however, these theories

offer a reasonable explanation for some of the facts; but these, too, are usually accountable for by the Spiritualistic hypothesis, which also explains what the others cannot.

We naturally look for the imprimatur of qualified personages when selecting veridical cases of spirit-intercourse. Nothing but the testimonies of most capable judges can satisfy us on a matter so important, and, as is commonly believed, obscure. But it is no easy matter to decide who is qualified and who is not. Choice almost invariably falls upon the scientist, because he has received a special training to enable him to observe and carefully weigh evidence, while a love of truth is supposed to determine all his conclusions. Furthermore, he at least has nothing to gain by testifying to these things; as a rule, indeed, he has much to lose. None recognises this more than the Spiritualist, and none appeals more persistently than he to scientific testimony to support his claims. We need to be careful, however, lest, in our anxiety for accuracy, we overlook other witnesses who may be equally qualified and sin-

cere. The testimony of the average person has some claim to respect, as the history of Modern Spiritualism clearly shows, for long before scientists gave their benediction to psychic phenomena, the rank and file spoke of their existence, and ventured to explain in various ways their origin. This, too, when science held itself entirely aloof with an air of disdainful superiority, declaring that whoever professed to believe in such things were either credulous fools or cunning rogues. Science was wrong, while the average person was right, as time has proved. The fact is, common-sense and sincerity are not bad qualifications for any investigator in the domains of psychical research. The phenomena, intricate enough in many instances, are often very plain and simple, so that none need then err.

It is because of this that no better example of authenticated cases of spirit-communication can be selected in opening this chapter, than that of "Abraham Florentine." All the witnesses are good, honourable folk who made no pretensions to possessing special qualifications for discerning

truth from error, but who nevertheless were exhaustive in their inquiries and careful in their conclusions regarding the nature of the invisible communicator. Their one desire was for truth; and when convinced who the unseen operator was, they were as surprised and pleased as strangers under the circumstances could be.

In August, 1874, the Rev. W. Stainton Moses was staying with Dr. Stanhope Speer at Shanklin, Isle of Wight. Being interested in Spiritualism, and the Rev. Stainton Moses an excellent medium, they had a number of sittings, and at one of them a spirit purported to communicate who gave his name as Abraham Florentine. He said he had been concerned in the war of 1812, and that he died at Brooklyn, U.S.A., on August 5th, 1874, at the age of eighty-three years, one month and seventeen days. At first there was some difficulty in making out whether the month and days referred to his age or to the length of his illness; but this difficulty was eventually overcome.

The manner in which the communication was made was table-tilting. The Rev. Stain-

ton Moses, Dr. Speer, and another person were seated round a heavy loo-table, which two persons could move only with difficulty. Instead of raps, to which on such occasions the company were accustomed, the table commenced to tilt. So eager was the communicating spirit, that the table rose some seconds before the required letter was arrived at. In order, for instance, to mark "T," it would rise, quivering as if with excitement, about "K," and then descend at "T" with a thump that shook the floor. This was repeated until the whole message was complete. From the general nature of the phenomena the opinion was formed that Abraham Florentine, were he a real entity, was of a decided and impetuous disposition.

The matter was privately communicated to Mr. Epes Sargent, who inserted an account of it in the *Banner of Light* on December 12th, 1874, which resulted in the following letter being received from America:

"To the Editor of the *Banner of Light.*

"In the *Banner* to-day received here, is the paragraph concerning a spirit who mani-

fested through the medium of a dining-table at some place in England, and gave the name of Abraham Florentine, a soldier in the war of 1812. You make inquiry whether anyone ever heard of Abraham Florentine. I cannot specifically answer that question, but having been engaged some fourteen years since in auditing the claims of the soldiers of 1812 in the State of New York, I am yet in possession of the records of all such who made claims for service in that war. In those records appears the name of Abraham Florentine, of Brooklyn, New York, and a full record of his service can be obtained in the Office of the Adjutant-General of the State of New York, in claim No. 11,518, war of 1812. I think, however, that he there claimed for a longer term of service than that he gave in England, his allowance being fifty-eight dollars.

"WILSON MILLAR,
"Claim Agent.

"Washington, D.C.,
"December 13th, 1874."

In accordance with this advice a letter was addressed by the Editor of the *Banner* to the

Adjutant-General, S.N.Y., asking for the facts without giving any reason for the request. The following reply was received:

"General Headquarters,
"State of New York,
"Adjutant-General's Office,
"Albany,
"January 25th, 1875.

"Sirs,

"In reply to your communication, dated January 22nd, I have to furnish you the following information from the records of this office: Abraham Florentine, private in Captain Nicole's Company, 1st Regiment, New York Militia, Colonel Dodge, volunteered at New York on or about the 2nd of September, 1814, served three months, and was honourably discharged. He received Land Warrant No. 63,365, for forty acres. The above is taken from the soldier's sworn statement, and not from official records.

"Very respectfully,
"Franklin Townsend,
"Adjutant-General.

"Colby & Rich,
"No. 9, Montgomery Place,
"Boston."

Dr. Crowell, of Brooklyn, N.Y., took steps to obtain additional verification from Florentine's widow. His letter was published in the *Banner,* February 20th, 1875, as follows:

"To the Editor of the *Banner of Light.*

"Sir,

"Upon reading in the *Banner* of the 13th inst., the article headed 'Abraham Florentine—Verification of his Message,' I examined my Brooklyn Directory, and there found the name of Abraham Florentine, with the address 119, Kosciusco Street. Being at the moment disengaged and interested in pursuing the subject, I at once sought the street and number indicated, and my application at the door was met by an elderly lady, of whom I inquired whether Mr. Abraham Florentine resided there. The reply was, 'He did reside here, but he is now dead.'

Ques.: May I inquire whether you are Mrs. Florentine, his widow?

Ans.: I am.

"Upon here remarking that I would be pleased to obtain some information about her late husband, she invited me to a seat

in the parlour, and our conversation was then resumed.

Ques.: May I ask when he died?

Ans.: Last August.

Ques.: At what time in that month?

Ans.: On the fifth.

Ques.: What was his age at time of his decease?

Ans.: Eighty-three.

Ques.: Had he passed his eighty-third year?

Ans.: Yes; his eighty-third birthday was on the previous eighth of June.

Ques.: Was he engaged in any war?

Ans.: Yes; in the war of 1812.

Ques.: Was he naturally active and self-reliant, or the reverse?

Ans.: He had a will of his own, and was rather impetuous.

Ques.: Was his last illness of long or short duration, and did he suffer much?

Ans.: He was confined to bed for a year or more, and suffered a good deal.

"EUGENE CROWELL, M.D.

"Brooklyn, N.Y.,

"February 15th, 1875."

It will be observed there is a discrepancy of ten days between the age of Abraham Florentine as communicated through the table and that stated by his wife. But it is a discrepancy hardly worthy of serious notice, as either he or she may have been equally mistaken. The main facts are unmistakably accurate. Besides, Abraham Florentine was, previous to this event, unknown to any of the sitters. Nor had they friends in America who could have supplied them with news of what went on there; and even supposing they had, it is very improbable they would have reported an affair in which they could have felt no interest. The facts may therefore be regarded as reliable evidence of the spiritual presence at the séance in the Isle of Wight, of the old American soldier, who had lived and died more than three thousand miles away.

In the *Annals of Psychical Science* for September, 1907, under the signature of Dr. Joseph Venzano, who relates the incident at first-hand soon after it occurred, appears the following account, which, under the circumstances, is accountable for only as evi-

dence of continued existence after death. The room in which it occurred was lighted by a candle in an ante-room, and the medium was under strict control.

"In spite of the dimness of the light," writes Dr. Venzano, "I could distinctly *see* Mme. Paladino and my fellow-sitters. Suddenly, I perceived that behind me was a form, fairly tall, which was leaning its head on my left shoulder and sobbing violently, so that those present could hear the sobs; it kissed me repeatedly. I clearly perceived the outlines of this face, which touched my own, and I felt the very fine and abundant hair in contact with my left cheek, so that I could be quite sure that it was a woman. The table then began to move, and by typtology gave the name of a close family connection who was known to no one present except myself. She had died some time before, and on account of incompatibility of temperament there had been serious disagreements with her. I was so far from expecting this typtological response that I at first thought this was a case of coincidence

of name; but while I was mentally forming this reflection I felt a mouth, with warm breath, touch my left ear and whisper, *in a low voice in Genoese dialect,* a succession of sentences, the murmur of which was audible to the sitters. These sentences were broken by bursts of weeping, and their gist was to repeatedly implore pardon for injuries done to me, with a fulness of detail connected with family affairs which could only be known to the person in question. The phenomenon seemed so real that I felt compelled to reply to the excuses offered me with expressions of affection, and to ask pardon in my turn if any resentment of the wrongs referred to had been excessive. But I had scarcely uttered the first syllables when two hands, with exquisite delicacy, applied themselves to my lips and prevented my continuing. The form then said to me, 'Thank you!' embraced me, kissed me, and disappeared."

Others present at the séance corroborated these facts. Hallucination, therefore, could not explain them. The recipient asserts that he was perfectly calm throughout the pro-

ceedings, and that he did not cease to carefully watch the medium, who was awake and visible to all present. Dr. Venzano was quite convinced of the absence of fraud; the medium being quite ignorant of the family details that had been revealed. This case is particularly interesting, as it originally forced one of the most capable and sceptical inquirers—an expert prestidigitateur and an authority on the detection of psychic frauds—into an attitude of belief.*

The Society for Psychical Research was founded in 1882 for the express purpose of scientifically investigating the phenomena of Spiritualism. Of the four men who were instrumental in founding it—Professor Henry Sidgwick, Dr. Edmund Gurney, F. W. H. Myers and Professor W. F. Barrett—the latter alone remains with us. More recently has departed Professor Richard Hodgson, the only member of the Society who devoted his whole life to the work of investigation. His knowledge of the physical phenomena of Spiritualism and of the

*"Eusapia Paladino and her Phenomena," p. 283. By Hereward Carrington.

trance communications received through Mrs. Piper, is said to have been unrivalled. Mrs. Piper is a remarkable trance speaker and automatic writing medium, whose services have been specially retained for several years by the Society for Psychical Research to aid them in their investigations.

It is natural to suppose that if it be possible for the dead to communicate with us, that those gentlemen who had striven so hard during a considerable portion of their lives to discover the possibility of this, should, upon their decease, continue their efforts from the other side. There is naturally a peculiar difficulty in the case of persons so well known to the workers in this particular field, to find the kind of proof desired. With people unknown to the medium, and sometimes to the sitter, until inquiry is made, the task is much more simple. But when the medium and sitter alike are acquainted with the nature and abilities of the spirit-communicator, the field of evidence is considerably narrowed. It is therefore more noteworthy that notwithstanding these difficulties, impressive evidence of the

identity of these personages has been received, as a perusal of the "Proceedings of the S.P.R." will readily prove.

Vol. XXII. of the "Proceedings" of the English Society for Psychical Research contains the account of an incident known as "the Greek message," which took place in 1907, and which appears to afford conclusive evidence of the continued existence of F. W. H. Myers several years after his decease. The medium, who was wholly ignorant of Greek, was in a deep trance throughout, and unacquainted with the published works of Frederic Myers. The words chosen for the test had been used by Myers when living as a motto to a poem upon Tennyson, being there credited to their author, Plotinus. In his famous work, "Human Personality," Myers had given a translation of this passage from Plotinus. Their meaning is "even heaven waveless," and they were used by Plotinus to describe the condition of calm in nature most favourable to a state of ecstasy. While Myers was supposed to influence the medium from the spirit side, the entranced medium pronounced the Greek

words without any comment, except to tell what they suggested.

It was felt by the experimenter that if the personality were really Myers he should give in his answer:

1. The meaning of the words.
2. The name of the author.
3. A reference to Myers' book, "Human Personality," where the words were translated.
4. A reference to Tennyson, since it was as a motto to a poem on Tennyson that Myers had quoted the words.
5. Possibly a reference to Tennyson's poem, "Crossing the Bar," which it was thought suggested the motto.

Although this was asking a very great deal, the alleged Myers accepted the challenge; and as if to make the test more convincing, gave a large part of his answer, not to the deviser of the test, but to another person, almost ignorant of the nature of the experiment.

All that was asked for and much more of an equally evidential nature was given through Mrs. Piper, without any help whatsoever. What more could be expected as proof of identity? Try as one will, the only explanation that can meet these facts is the Spiritualistic one. "The alleged spirit of Myers did all that could have been expected of the living Myers," even to mentioning every association the Greek words in question were thought likely to suggest.*

The communications from George Pelham may now be almost regarded as classical instances of authenticated spirit-intercourse. No comment on them is necessary. Many of them seem to be nothing less than plain, straightforward evidences of the survival of bodily death.

George Pelham (the name is assumed) was a young American author and lawyer, well-known to Professor Richard Hodgson; and it was, indeed, this case that convinced the "arch-sceptic," as Dr. Hodgson has been called, of the survival of bodily death. Pelham died suddenly, as the result

*See also "Light," Vol. 38, No. 1, 937, 1918.

of an accident, in February, 1892. He and Hodgson had had long talks on philosophical subjects, and had discussed the possibility of a future life, which Pelham held to be incredible and inconceivable. Four years before his death he had had a single sitting with Mrs. Piper, his name being carefully concealed from her, and there is no reason to suppose she knew of the existence of any such person. A few weeks after his death George Pelham purported to communicate with a friend of his, John Hart (assumed name), who was having a sitting with Mrs. Piper. He recognised his own stud which the sitter was wearing, and correctly stated how he came into possession of it. He mentioned two intimate friends, James and Mary Howard, and gave a message to Katherine (their daughter): "Tell her, she'll know. I will solve the problems, Katherine." Mr. Howard explained, in reference to this, that Pelham, when he last stayed with them, had had frequent talks with Katherine on the great problems of existence, and had promised her, in almost the

words of his spirit-message, that some time he would solve them.

At a sitting some months later at which were present Mr. and Mrs. Howard and (part of the time) their daughter Katherine, and a reporter, the following evidence was forthcoming:

("Phinuit" is the name given by the intelligence who sometimes used the organism of Mrs. Piper for the purpose of conveying messages purporting to come from the spirit-world to the sitters.)

Phinuit: He [George Pelham] has been to see his father, and he has seen, he has taken a book and carried it to have it printed. [His father had collected his poems and had them printed in a small volume, which appeared just before the first sitting of this series.]

During the early part of the sitting, Katherine entered the room and sat down in a remote corner. Almost immediately Phinuit said: " 'He wants to see who is Katrine.' " Katherine comes over, and G. P. takes control of the voice, and personal greetings follow. Recognition of dress, also of shawl,

which was asked for, and which was placed over Mrs. Piper's shoulders.

"What is it takes me to Paris?" [The shawl had been worn in Paris frequently during a year, but there is no reason to suppose that G. P., living, was aware of this.]

"G. P. inquired what had been done with a special picture which he had owned.

Mrs. H.: 'That got torn up after you passed out, but here is a picture that I don't know whether you will recognise, but you used to know the place.' [G. P. puts picture on top of the head.]

G. P.: 'What is this? This is your summer house.'

Mrs. H.: 'Yes, you have got it right.'

G. P.: 'But I have forgotten the name of the town.'

Mrs. H.: 'Don't you remember D——?'

G. P.: 'Oh, the little brick house and the little vine, grape-vine some call them. Yes, I remember it all; it comes back as distinctly as the daylight. Where is the little out-house?' [All correct. The little hen-house that, like the house itself, was solidly built of brick, just did not come into the

picture, but came to the very edge of it, so it was natural for George to ask where it was. The grape-vine that covered the whole house up to the roof was a striking feature of it.—K.]

Mrs. H.: 'There is the painting' [handing another picture].

G. P.: 'No, I have no recollection of that.'

Mrs. H.: 'No, I painted it when you were not there. You never saw that.'

G. P.: 'It is not fresh to me all; but this' [fingering the photo of the house] 'is very clear. Katherine.'

Mrs. H.: 'She remembers that, too.'

G. P.: 'She was a little thing. Then you bought a place at some *ville.*' [Katherine's age when we left D—— was six, nearly seven. We first bought the place at X—ville in 1886.] 'Further references to personal incidents at D——'

'Katherine, how is the violin?' (She plays the violin.) 'To hear you playing it is horrible, horrible.'

Mrs. H.: 'But don't you see she likes her music because it is the best she has?'

G. P.: 'No, but that is what I used to say,

that it is horrible.' [George was always more or less annoyed by hearing Katherine practise when she was beginning the violin as a little child.—K.]

G. P.: [A basket put into G. P.'s hand, which he had given as a Christmas present.] 'That is mine. Where is my lamp arrangement? I was very fond of that, you know.' [He had also expressly got a small light shade that could be moved round the shade of an ordinary lamp to cut off the light from the eye, and he had used this much when living. He had made other references to this in previous sittings.]

Mrs. H.: 'I want you to see that' [handing a paper].

G. P.: 'You wrote that to me this morning.' [It was a poem on death, written that morning with G. P. in mind, but no reference to G. P. in it.] [Another paper handed.] 'That is a letter that is mine. That is my own, but that was written a long time ago.' [Correct. A letter of his written many years before.] 'Give my regards to James Peirce. Tell him I could not speak to him, but I will again, and when you dine

with him, think of me.' [George occasionally dined at the house of James Peirce in company with Mr. Howard.]

Mr. H.: 'George, do you know who this is from?' [handing an unopened newspaper enclosed in a wrapper as if just received in the mail].

After saying, 'Where is John Hart?' G. P. correctly stated that the newspaper came from Orenberg; then to Mr. Howard he said, 'Get the long pipe and smoke.' [Mr. Howard was in the habit of smoking a long pipe in the evening.]'"*

The "Honolulu" incident, recorded by Sir Oliver Lodge in his book, "Raymond, or Life and Death," is excellent evidence of the continued existence of his son, Raymond, who was killed in the attack on Hooge Hill, 14th September, 1915.

It happened that a son and daughter of the famous physicist were going through London on their way to the South of England, on Friday, 26th May, 1916, and had arranged to have a sitting with a medium—Mrs. Leonard—about noon. At noon of the

*"Proceedings" S.P.R. Vol. XIII.

same day, it occurred to another of Sir Oliver's sons to hold an impromptu séance; and for this purpose he obtained the assistance of two of his sisters. Together they had a short sitting at a table at their home in Birmingham. Knowing their brother and sister were having a sitting in London simultaneously, they asked Raymond to give their love to them and try to get the medium to say "Honolulu." The London sitters knew absolutely nothing of this. Notes were carefully taken of both séances, and they were afterwards compared. It was then found that the word "Honolulu" had been got successfully through the medium in London. Thus:

The medium, speaking to one of the sitters, said: "You could play."

N. M. L.: "Play what?"

"Not a game, a music."

N. M. L.: "I am afraid I can't, Raymond."

Feda (medium), *sotto voce*: "She can't do that." "He wanted to know whether you could play 'Hulu-Honolulu.' Well, can't you try to? He is rolling with laugh-

ter" [meaning that he's pleased about something].*

Such messages as this led Sir Oliver to assert that "the foundation of the atomic theory in chemistry is to him no stronger" than evidence for spirit intercourse. They broke for him the back of all legitimate and reasonable scepticism. Although to many of the readers of his book the facts which are such decided proofs to Sir Oliver Lodge may not have the same compelling force. That must, of course, often be the case where spirit identity is concerned. The evidence must frequently be so delicate that only those who knew the communicating spirit can appreciate its real value. In instances like the "Honolulu case," however—which word curiously was associated with music, a song—the facts seem perfectly clear and convincing. If Raymond still lived and could from his new life communicate with his relations, and was as interested in proving this as he appears to have been, it is only to be expected he would endeavour to con-

*"Raymond, or Life and Death," pp. 271-2, 274. By Sir Oliver Lodge.

vey this word to his brother and sister in London. Any other conclusion confuses the whole matter and makes the explanation of it a mere assumption. In this instance—considering the cumulative evidence contained in the book of Raymond's ability to communicate—the simplest explanation is undoubtedly the correct one.

It will be noticed that in all the preceding cases of identity mentioned, there has been no effort to depart from plain matter-of-fact proof. There is indeed no more valuable evidence than that kind. It is a fruitful cause for complaint among critics that Spiritualism gives no evidence of an exalted character. Such a complaint has no meaning. The first aim of any spirit anxious to prove its identity is necessarily an appeal to personal facts. A disquisition on Immortality or the existence of God may be very beautiful and inspiring, and thought-provoking, but it is not necessarily evidence. In that respect it would be without significance to the average individual who passes into the Great Beyond. Usually in life he has shown no taste or ability for such intricate

discussions. But the fact that he had a certain appearance, or some personal peculiarity, or love for some particular thing or a name, stands for much. Let it be repeated: it is the small things that count as proof very often in communications.

Apart from evidence of identity pure and simple, much of an exalted and enlightening nature regarding great problems has been received from these same sources; but to discuss them here would take us too far afield.

CHAPTER VI

MEDIUMS TRUE AND FALSE

Mediumship the foundation of Spiritualism; importance of mediums; mediumship helps to co-ordinate history; reveals new aspects of natural law; Spiritualism meets materialists on their own grounds; defects of mediumship; influence of mental and emotional states on mediumship; universal influences against mediumship; psychology of mediumship; mediums blamed for failures; the instability of psychology; the influence of "association of ideas"; danger of hasty conclusions; the influence of the subconsciousness; Spiritualists allow for this; mediumship and the law; the law needs modifying.

MEDIUMSHIP is the foundation of Modern Spiritualism. Without the one the other could never have been. Mediums are sometimes called "psychics," or "sensitives." It is as well to fix these facts in mind if a proper appreciation of mediumship in relation to this important subject is to be obtained. Few people have been more adversely criticised than this community. Religious folk have long been in the habit of

regarding them as instruments of the devil —consciously or unconsciously; materialists and sceptics have usually regarded them as frauds. All this is gradually changing; but there is still much left to be desired. The tendency in the past has been to condemn mediums offhand. In reality they ought to have been closely studied. They *must* be closely studied if a correct knowledge of the laws governing psychic phenomena is to be attained.

Think what it means! Psychic phenomena are now recognised facts; even the enemies of Spiritualism admit that. Supposing these wonderful happenings are not brought about by the action of disembodied spirits, even then new and wonderful aspects of natural law have undoubtedly been brought to light through the agency of psychics. "Modern Miracles" is what one great scientist has tentatively called psychic phenomena. If mediums have done nothing else, they have made it possible to bring into the realm of history and co-ordinate vast numbers of interesting facts which hitherto have found no fitting place, and have therefore been left

severely alone by historians. What else could historians do, since they disbelieved in the possibility of a violation of known natural laws? From their point of view these strange things could not happen; yet they have often been testified to by numerous and unimpeachable witnesses. If evidence stands for anything, those ancient marvels must have happened.

These new aspects of natural law may yet prove far more valuable to humanity than any yet known. The lifting of heavy objects without visible means, the passing of matter through matter, the carriage of objects—often of considerable weight—great distances almost in the twinkling of an eye, all obviously brought about under intelligent control, are facts inconceivably valuable. The ability to see what is happening at a distance, to discover lost objects, to communicate directly from mind to mind, surpass in their possibilities such immensely important discoveries as the telephone and wireless telegraphy.

Should psychic phenomena prove the existence of a spirit world and the continuity

of life after death, even greater service will have been done mankind. Light will be thrown upon the most obscure of all subjects, at a time when faith is no longer capable of satisfying thinking people. One of the most terrible effects of the great war will be eliminated, and perhaps grief will give way to joy. Now the Modern Spiritualist is already convinced regarding this supreme matter, and confident that an impartial trial of his claims will result in convincing every unbiased person. It is certain that all those who have thought about a future life, apart from Modern Spiritualism and kindred movements, have had to admit they know nothing about it, other than what is manifestly foolish and contradictory. Each great religion gives out different teachings on this all-important subject, and even within the same religion glaring contradictions exist. The declaration that reason is no measure of revelation is now believed by a great number of thoughtful individuals to be a cunningly designed means of preventing priestly ignorance and error from being seen in their true perspective. The old

methods are giving way to more rational processes, and we may be quite sure that if there can be obtained *no* evidence of an after life, no clerical institution, however venerable, can hope to stem the tide of materialism. Spiritualism, on the contrary, meets the materialist on his own ground, invites him to apply his own principles of inquiry, and from the result thereby obtained to draw his own conclusions. Most Spiritualists have done this with beneficial consequences to themselves and true religion. In every case the sensitive has been the all-important factor, for without the remarkable powers of these unusual individuals, psychic phenomena would be unattainable.

Mediumship appears to have no special relation to age, sex or class. Some splendid psychics are to be found among the "upper ten," as well as among all the other ranks of Society. There are far more developed mediums than are commonly heard of. This is not surprising, considering how unpopular the subject has hitherto been. No doubt the rapid change now taking place in public

opinion will make psychics more inclined to reveal themselves.

The exact nature of mediumship promises long to remain a mystery. Beyond the discovery that a "magnetism" or "fluid," and sometimes even physical substance itself, is extracted from the sensitive's body and made to produce certain physical manifestations; and that certain unusual faculties of feeling, hearing and seeing, ascribable to latent senses that will become normally active when man lives in a higher and more spiritual world, but which are in part exercised here and now by mediums—nothing definite is known. These faculties and magnetic fluids are very susceptible to the operation of mental forces; more particularly to those exerted by the spirit-people. A good deal has been said about their responsiveness to the thoughts of the medium and the sitters, and a number of instances can be quoted which seem to substantiate the claim.

Very often, however, they can be quite as satisfactorily accounted for by the Spiritualistic theory; but full allowance must be made for the possibility of the interposition

of the action of thought from ordinary people. There is undoubtedly much evidence of the remarkable effect thoughts and emotions have upon all phases of psychic phenomena. This is one of the greatest difficulties to be faced. As a rule, powerful thoughts of any kind hinder rather than help the proceedings. Passivity of mind is almost essential for the attainment of the best results in the séance-room. That is why a medium has been defined as a person who is constitutionally sensitive or susceptible to "influences," and who responds more or less readily to the dominant thoughts or impulses that impinge upon his own "aura" or "magnetic sphere."* But he is mainly under the influence of disembodied beings. These influences act collectively as well as singly, and this conveys an idea of the disabilities under which mediums inevitably labour to-day.

Most of the people who investigate Spiritualism are at first almost invariably subject to powerful opposition to it from within

* "A Guide to Mediumship." By E. W. and M. H. Wallis, p. 103.

themselves. They either do not believe, or they are nervous or fearful. Very often they are in deep distress. All these conditions hinder psychic work, particularly the latter, and in each instance the sitter conduces to the defeat of his own ends. It is a common thing for the unseen communicators to plead with sitters to be "less tense," on the ground that tenseness in any form makes communication more difficult. A bright, cheerful, friendly attitude is always best. This is, of course, hardly to be expected from those who are sceptical and intent on discovering the truth. The very request is usually regarded as an effort on the medium's part to weaken the observing power of the inquirer, or to make him become credulous. Needless to say, a friendly, cheerful attitude is quite compatible with keen observation and sound judgment; but anything that savours of "special pleading" in this matter is usually regarded as proof of weakness and dishonesty. Yet none of these requests is incompatible with science. The necessity of respecting conditions is well recognised in chemistry, for instance.

The production of any desired result depends upon obedience to the laws governing it. No intelligent person would venture to prescribe his own laws. What he does is to endeavour to discover nature's laws and put them into operation. Psychic science is no exception to the rule; but because such subtle influences as mental and emotional forces enter largely into it, the casual, and often very illogical, critic condemns it.

If these conditions were extended over the entire legitimate field influencing psychical research, almost the whole of modern life would be impeached. The mental and emotional forces of civilisation are, with few exceptions, quite against Spiritualism in its broadest sense, and mediumship is thereby greatly retarded. The inherent materialism of the age touches every phase of life. The last two centuries have witnessed a remarkable development of commercial and industrial activities, and they have turned the thoughts of nearly the whole world almost exclusively to temporal gain. The early seventies of the nineteenth century were recognised as the high-water mark

of scientific materialism, with its depressing reaction upon philosophy and religion, and its influence is still severely felt. Perhaps no greater indictment from a religious point of view can be passed on the non-spiritual trend of the age than to remark upon the deplorable fact that the highest honours have been almost invariably conferred on financiers and people of purely materialistic tastes. Whether this be in itself good or bad, its influence upon spirit intercourse has raised tremendous barriers and has often unintentionally involved mediumship in great difficulties.

The psychological aspect of mediumship, even from this point of view, therefore, leaves much to be desired and discovered. It often unaccountably breaks down and the blame, almost without exception, is laid upon the psychic; the assumption being that if he were genuine, failures could not happen. We ought to judge with caution here. Normal psychology, whose special function it is to deal with the conscious states of the ordinary, everyday individual, is in a very undeveloped state. Great schools of

thought differ on most obvious and profound points. There are eminent thinkers who stake the whole of their arguments upon the assertion that man has no free will; others take just as vehemently the opposite point of view. The dictum of one of the greatest of modern psychologists, the late Professor William James, was that psychology is particularly fragile, and not even a science, but only the hope of a science. Its data, he declared, must be reconsidered in wider connections and other terms!* This is nothing more than a candid confession that ordinary mental states are at present beyond our power of comprehension. It is therefore not too much to ask, that before anyone attempts to investigate and criticise the abnormal mental conditions always involved in the exercise of genuine psychic powers, that some attention should be paid to this aspect of the subject.

Now let us observe the psychic in one or two of his modes of functioning. In many cases of clairvoyance the medium is perfectly conscious. Like the sitter, he has men-

* "Text Book of Psychology," p. 468. By W. James.

tal and emotional experiences. His task is to get into touch with the unseen world and to give proof of the fact. He has the power of seeing invisible objects; and he can at will very often bring it successfully into operation. But he has usually no control whatever over the things he may happen to see. His peculiar vision does not enable him in most instances to see into the spirit-world, but into conditions of matter that exist in an intermediary realm between this world and that. It is obvious, therefore, that before he can describe a spirit form, it must first be made to appear by the intelligence desiring to manifest itself; but before the spirit can accomplish this it must have:

1. Sufficient of the necessary kind of psycho-plasm in which to appear.
2. Sufficient skill to utilise the psycho-plasm for its special purpose.

This is no easy thing, and, as one may well suppose, it is accomplished with varying results. Some idea of the ability that is required for such a gigantic task can easily be formed from the remarkable scientific

evidence that is already forthcoming along these lines. In cases of materialisation, in which the densest kind of psycho-plasm has to be used, the forms resemble in every way ordinary living people, with flesh, bone, blood, teeth, hair, temperature, and so on. Compare that phenomenon with what science has sought to accomplish when endeavouring to produce life from matter. Scientists would be perfectly content to obtain the lowest possible expression of life, mere spontaneous movement. The greatest learning and skill have up till the present failed to do this. What untold skill and knowledge must therefore be necessary on the part of the spirit operators before they can produce the marvellous manifestations of life they so frequently make!

When the form has been built up for the medium to see, it becomes necessary for the communicating entity to convey evidential facts of its identity to the medium, and through him to the sitter, for whose edification it has come. The first step was difficult. It is not inconceivable that each subsequent step will be still more difficult. We have it

on the best testimony that this is the case. The Hodgson, Myers, Pelham, and numerous other controls, have frequently stated that contact with denser states of matter, compared with that of their own subtle spiritual condition, makes them "dull," "forgetful," "sleepy." Let us now suppose the communication is coming through fairly well. In most instances spirit messages, during this kind of séance, are transmitted by "impressions" or thought transference; sometimes by signs; and at others symbols are adopted. Very frequently feelings are transmitted which are not commonly known to the psychic. He may therefore translate them wrongly. Then the association of ideas is a powerful factor here, as in almost everything else. The form may resemble someone whom the medium knows, and there may be set in motion in his own mind a train of thoughts related to this person, which may shut out what the communicator is trying to convey. The psychic, without the least intention of doing wrong, may think his own thoughts are really conveyed by the spirit entity, and so errors creep in inadvertently.

This state of affairs happens very frequently. Thus a name, a relationship, or the cause of death, may be wrongly suggested, and tend to vitiate the test value of the sitting.

Facts such as these naturally convey the idea that mediumship is always more or less unreliable. Undoubtedly it is so to a large extent; but notwithstanding these and other obstacles, the most astounding and convincing results are often obtained; whilst, on the other hand, perfectly genuine mediumship is often made to appear fraudulent.

No doubt a good deal of imposture passes current as genuine mediumship, and it is often difficult to discriminate between them; and, in consequence, genuine psychic powers are sometimes wrongly impeached. Profound ignorance of the nature of psychic phenomena and immature judgment, especially in the early days of Spiritualism, have also been the cause of a good deal of misunderstanding and condemnation of sensitives. During recent years the more qualified investigators have been literally startled at the grievous mistakes and wrong accusa-

tions levelled at psychics in earlier years. For a long time, for instance, materialisation was pronounced by sincere investigators as nothing but trickery. The very tests they applied seemed conclusively to prove this. One method was to mark surreptitiously some part of the supposed spirit body with some coloured material, and after the séance to examine the medium. If the mark was found on him, he was naturally considered a fraud. Thus many materialising mediums were discredited. Sometimes, however, even in the face of such apparently overwhelming evidence, it was realised this could not have been so. Perhaps the medium had been seen simultaneously with the materialised form; or, having been securely tied to a chair by the sitters before the séance, and the knots carefully sealed, at the end of the séance he would be found still securely bound and sealed. It was, therefore, impossible for him to have left the chair during the whole of the proceedings. The solution to the mystery was found when it was discovered that the substance composing the materialised form was extracted

from corresponding parts of the medium's body. On the form dematerialising, these elements returned to the psychic's body, carrying with them the incriminating marks.

One of the most interesting results of Dr. W. J. Crawford's experiments in physical phenomena, is the heavy and varied reactions which occur with the medium, owing to some peculiar condition of her organism during the period of the phenomena. It is only to be expected that if movements take place in the medium's body synchronising with the phenomena, that the sceptic will regard them with suspicion. Although the phenomena may appear to be quite disconnected from the medium in every way, these movements will lead one to suppose that the medium is cunningly making them. That is indeed what has long been supposed, and many mediums have suffered in consequence.

Dr. Crawford frequently noticed bodily reactions with Miss Goligher; yet she was totally unaware of them, although quite conscious during the séances. He has watched her sitting quietly on a chair in his own

house, with the light shining directly on her, while great sledge-hammer blows have been occurring on the floor several feet in front of her at intervals of a few seconds; and as each blow was struck, he has watched her whole body from the waist upwards, sway backwards several inches. As the blows became lighter and swifter, the character of the shocks reacting on her also changed, becoming also lighter and swifter—and finally, when a fusillade of raps was being produced, she was under a regular bombardment. He has stood beside her and felt the various motions of her body. Yet she was so unconscious of them, that but for the doctor's assurance she would have disbelieved that they had taken place. Dr. Crawford points out that there is a danger that an unobservant and unscientific witness of the rapping phenomena might uncritically conclude that these motions of the medium's body betokened fraud. In Miss Goligher's case he is absolutely sure she speaks the truth when she says she knows nothing about them. He, for one, knowing all he does about physical phenomena, would ac-

tually be surprised to see them entirely absent; for he has demonstrated that, although these phenomena are under the control of disembodied entities, they are purely mechanical operations and must, therefore, obey the laws of mechanics.*

In all mental forms of mediumship allowance must be made for the operations of the sub-conscious mind. No qualified Spiritualist denies the possibility of this particularly puzzling and vague aspect of the human consciousness interposing in various kinds of spirit communion. But to attribute to it all the phenomena is stupid. Nothing can so well serve the biassed critic as something about which so little is known that he may speculate with impunity upon it. Such factors used merely as destructive arguments may be dragged in to explain anything the person dislikes. This has been constantly done in regard to the subconsciousness in connection with Spiritualism, until at last there have been credited to this mysterious phase of our being, powers, so vast, that those who really know something of its pos-

* *The International Psychic Gazette*, September, 1916.

sibilities might well stand aghast. Its marvellous exhibitions of supernormal sight and hearing and feeling, its occasional ability to guide and warn and control, its remarkable curative powers which may instantly banish serious disease, naturally lead us to wonder what it might be in all its potency. But after full allowance has been made for the action of the subconscious mind in psychic communications, there is still left over a mass of unexplained facts. And after all, for test purposes, that is all that concerns Spiritualism.

Indeed, in the hands of a master-mind—F. W. H. Myers—the powers of the subconsciousness have been demonstrated as in themselves sufficient to prove that man is destined to survive death, and that instead of the Spiritualist regarding it as evidence against his claims, he may justly regard it as supporting them, after making proper allowance for its activities.*

Spiritualists are fully aware that these uncertainties leave the field open to char-

*"Human Personality," vv. 1 and 2. By F. W. H. Myers, 1903.

latanry and do all in their power to overcome them. There can, however, be little doubt that a good deal that has been condemned as fraud was genuine mediumship. Many of the best-known and most powerful psychics have been denounced in this way; and those who have been responsible for it have been mostly inspired with bigotry and ignorance.

The present attitude of the law is no criterion on the subject. There are upon the statute books of this country certain laws which can be interpreted as condemning all forms of psychism. In the eyes of the law there seems to be no such thing as psychic phenomena, and whoever exercises psychic gifts in any form may be said to come within the condemnation of the law. At one time the law legislated severely against occult practices, because, whilst recognising the existence of psychic powers, it regarded them as evil. Communion with an unseen world was believed to be an awful possibility, but whoever ventured upon it was regarded mainly as being a danger to the spiritual welfare of the State, and deserving of eter-

nal, as well as of temporal, punishment. Thus, it was decreed in the Tudor period that such malefactors should suffer forfeiture of property, the pains of death, and the loss of privilege of clergy, and sanctuary; in other words, damnation materially and spiritually. The ignorant credulity of those days gave way in later times to the opposite extreme. Act 9, George II., c. 5, known as the Witchcraft Act, which came into force on the 24th June, 1736, is the Act still in force. In reference to it Ellis T. Powell, LL.B., D.Sc., says:

"The new Act, therefore, repeals the penalties enacted against what were now regarded as impossible offences, but goes on to enact punishment for those who *pretended* to exercise the discredited arts, 'For the more effectual preventing and punishing of any *pretences* to such arts or powers.'" *

It has always been decided in cases of offence against this Act, that no such powers as those claimed by mediums exist. A

* "Psychic Science and Barbarous Legislation," p. 18. By Ellis T. Powell, LL.B., D.Sc.

more outstanding example of the law opposing the discoveries of science it would be difficult to quote. Absolutely no attenion is paid by this Act to the result of the researches of men like Sir William Crookes, Professor C. Lombroso, Sir Oliver Lodge, Camille Flammarion, Professor William James, Dr. Venzano, Dr. W. J. Crawford, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and a host of others of world-wide repute as qualified observers. The nature of the law compels it to lag behind progression, and history affords many sad examples of the fact. In this respect Spiritualism may be said to stand where once the Quakers and Roman Catholics stood in the eyes of the law.

A modification of this unjust state of things must take place before long; but in the meantime Mediumship, Spiritualism, and Psychic Science are in an unenviable position. There are indisputably true psychics; and they are of such value to the future of the human race, that Spiritualists have no hesitation in believing that the authorities will yet see fit to co-operate with

them in carefully distinguishing the real from the false; and not always, as at present, ruthlessly condemn all without discrimination.

CHAPTER VII

CLAIRVOYANCE OR "CLEAR-SEEING"

Seers in all ages and climes; "second sight"; its symbolical nature; case mentioned by Rev. Dr. Stewart; difference between Highland seers and Spiritualistic clairvoyants; four well-defined forms of clairvoyance; true clairvoyance; John of Patmos, Swedenborg; "etheric sight"; another form of "objective clairvoyance"; "subjective clairvoyance"; variations in size of vision; "distance" or "travelling clairvoyance"; clairvoyance difficult to develop; the professional use of psychic gifts; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and psychic phenomena.

EACH of the several forms of mediumship is so interesting and important as to require a special treatise quite beyond the limits of these pages. None of them is simple, nor have any yet been fully explained. Here it will be wise to deal with one of them, if only for the purpose of conveying an idea of the scope and complexity of the subject. No better choice can be made than the faculty of clairvoyance, because no other psychic gift is so popular nor so extensively used. But

even this form of mediumship is not yet fully understood, although it has probably received much more attention than any other.

No age or race has been without some individuals who have laid claim to the power of seeing spiritual visions; and no religion has been without its seers. In the Primitive Christian Church a diversity of spiritual gifts was so firmly believed in and sought after, that the possession of one or the other of them seems to have been regarded as the greatest of blessings; among them was the "discerning of spirits." Popularly this has come to be known as "second sight," which usually, however, denotes the seeing of events before they come to pass. So real do many of these visions appear to be, that they may at the time be actually mistaken for physical events. We hear most about the gift existing among the Celts of the Highlands of Scotland; but it does not seem to be the sole possession of any particular people. There can be no doubt that it is peculiarly constitutional among the Celtic races, for among the inhabitants of Ireland

and Wales it is also frequently found. The faculty is an involuntary one, and its visions are often symbolical, sometimes in peculiar and eerie ways. One of the earliest references to this kind of manifestation is found in the "Odyssey," where Theoclyminus sees a shroud of mist about the bodies of the Wooers, and drops of blood distilling from the walls of the hall of Odysseus. The Pythia of Delphi also saw blood on the walls during the Persian War. Similar examples occur in the ancient Icelandic Sagas, showing their symbolical nature. Modern travellers record remarkable facts concerning the existence of second sight among the Lapps, Red Indians, Zulus, Maoris, and many other races.

In the Highlands of Scotland the principal symbols beheld are the shroud, the corpse-candle, and other illuminations; but the most common forms that the visions take are the wraith, fetch, or shadowy self of some person soon to die, often wrapped in a shroud, or attended with some other of the special circumstances of death or burial.

An example of the peculiar nature of

some of these previsions is given by the Rev. Dr. Stewart, of Nether Lochaber. One of his parishioners, a woman, pointed out to him a rock by the sea which shone with a kind of phosphorescent brilliance. The doctor attributed the phenomenon to decaying seaweed; but the woman assured him that a corpse would be laid there on the morrow. This actually occurred. A body was brought in a boat for burial and laid at the foot of the rock, where, as Dr. Stewart found, there was no decaying vegetable matter. The exact detail with which an event yet to happen is sometimes seen is astounding. The whole of it is enacted before the seer perhaps days before the real event takes place. The appearance of the shroud—a sure presage of death—also reveals the nearness or remoteness of the occurrence by the amount of it which covers the body. If it is not seen above the waist a twelve-month may be hoped for; if higher towards the head, death is believed to be near at hand.

Second sight does not appear to be always hereditary, although in some cases it seems to have descended in the family. There is,

however, a persistent belief among the Highlanders that the seventh son of the seventh son has the gift naturally. Although the faculty is usually regarded as a sign of morbidity, predicting only sad events, this is not true. Dr. Samuel Johnson, who made a special study of the subject during his famous journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, remarks in his "Journal" that happy events are also foreseen. Prevision is only one of its aspects. "Distance" or "travelling" clairvoyance is frequently related to it. "A man," says the doctor, "on a journey far from home falls from his horse; another who is perhaps at work about the house sees him bleeding on the ground, commonly with a landscape of the place where the accident befalls him." He also objected to the fallacy that the faculty was possessed by the poor and illiterate only, a belief that has given strength to the supposition that the visions are mere hallucinations misunderstood through ignorance. Frequently educated people are endowed with the gift; and it is regarded by many who possess it as an affliction, although seers

are nearly always people healthy in every way.

An old idea, which has even now a very wide vogue, is that the faculty is vouchsafed only to those eminent for holiness, and that it is therefore truly spiritual. But there is no reason to doubt that it is often possessed by quite ordinary persons irrespective of their dispositions. A curious characteristic of the sight is that sometimes it can be transmitted from the seer to another by physical contact; whilst the vision may become so objective that all within a certain radius may see it like any ordinary material object.

Consideration of these well-known claims, which have long existed quite apart from Modern Spiritualism, enables us to realise that history, ancient and modern, confirms the pretensions of the modern clairvoyant.

There is no reason why a gift universal and ancient should not belong to any age; nor does there seem to be any reason why any particular race should be excluded from so singular a faculty. The principal difference between the clairvoyance of the Modern Spiritualist and that of, say, the Highland

seers, is that whereas with the Highlanders the gift is spontaneous, with Spiritualists it is often carefully cultivated. The consequence is that, while the Highland seers are totally ignorant of the nature and source of their visions, the modern clairvoyant has at least a fair idea of their origin.

Clairvoyance is by no means a simple matter. It consists of at least four well-defined phases, which, like all other forms of mediumship, vary in degree both with the individual from time to time, and in a general way. Three of these phases are of practical value and in more or less constant use among clairvoyants. The fourth is of a particularly exalted and spiritual character and has been experienced by a few great mystics only. It seems to a large extent to be the natural spiritual vision exercised normally by the spirit after death; and for the field of its operations depends largely upon a high degree of spirituality. Its practical value is to a great extent destroyed because the things revealed by it cannot be appreciated by ordinary people; although they may be of the greatest spiritual significance. Nor

can they always be made clear, because common experience affords no analogies by which they may be illustrated. Symbology is therefore resorted to, and to the practical Western mind that seldom appeals. John of Patmos, Swedenborg, and a few saints of all religions are outstanding examples of this form of seership, which is sometimes called "true clairvoyance."

"Etheric clairvoyance" is much more practical and widespread, and is doubtless capable of development to a considerable degree. The title is applied to it because the objects thus seen are obviously composed of some physical substance, although of too refined a nature for the normal eye to see. This substance is believed to be etheric; but whatever may be its constitution, clairvoyants alone can become aware of it. The light rays which it reflects are incapable of registration by the parts of the optic nerve ordinarily in use. They can, however, be seen by what must be regarded as higher fibres of the optic nerves and the cells of the appropriate brain-centre. This can be easily substantiated by the clairvoyant closing his

eyes, thereupon shutting out the vision, and by opening them and seeing it again. Sometimes the image remains long enough for this to be done several times, demonstrating it to be external to the seer. Were it subjective the vision would be seen as clearly with the eyes closed as open. The average ghost or "spook" belongs to this order; that is why some persons see it whilst others do not.

Etheric clairvoyance is as active in the dark as in the light. It is difficult to account for this unless on the supposition that the entity thus manifesting brings an illumination of its own, or that even when the sun has set certain degrees of light remain conserved in the atmosphere. That would make it what it is claimed to be, a purely physical phenomenon, arising from the physical nature of the substance used. That human beings cannot register all the degrees of light known to exist is shown in many ways. The domestic cat, ants, and many other animals see in what is to us darkness. In tropical forests, where night is intensely dark owing to the dense foliage, a

vast and varied host of animals and insects awake to a noisy and active existence during that period. Without the power to see in some way they could not do this; yet to the human being nothing is visible.

Etheric clairvoyance is only one kind of "objective clairvoyance." There is another form in which no physical organ appears to play a part. The vision evidently belongs to some other portion of the human economy, and by the Spiritualist it is ascribed to the "psychic body," *i.e.,* the organism in which the departing spirit enters the next world at death; and although in general appearance it resembles the physical body at its best and healthiest stage, its faculties are much superior to, and often very different from, our physical senses. The stimulation of these psychic faculties to their full scope during earth-life, results in the attainment of that marvellous and beautiful power of clairvoyance attained only by saints and mystics. It may, however, be developed in a partial degree; then objects made of finer degrees of matter than those seen by means of the etheric sight can be visualised. As a

rule the things thus witnessed appear far more real and vivid than physical objects. This form of clairvoyance is not less prevalent than the etheric. Perhaps it is more so. One of its peculiarities is that almost any part of the physical body may become the centre from which the faculty is functioned, although habit usually causes the seer to relate it to the region of the eyes. This explanation is comparable with that suggested by F. W. H. Myers to account for the remarkable cases of the transposition of senses, known to science. The experiments of Professor Fontain, of Toulon, with the sailor "B," showed clearly that when suffering from hysteria with attacks of catalepsy, B's senses became transposed. Instead of being able to see with his eyes he saw with the tips of his fingers, whilst his other senses were as strangely affected.* Lombroso refers to a similar case in which a young girl, during severe hysterical troubles, lost the power of seeing with her eyes, but "saw" with the same degree of acute-

* "Hystéro-Epilepsie Masculine," *Revue Philosophique*, August, 1887.

ness at the point of the nose and the lobe of the left ear.* Myers suggested "that the spirit which thus perceives in wholly supernormal fashion may be under the impression that it is perceiving through some corporeal channel—as the knee or the stomach." †

"Subjective clairvoyance" is, of course, exactly opposite in nature to objective clairvoyance, since it relates to visions existing in the mind, like creations of the imagination. They appear to be objective through an action of the mind similar to that which causes dream images to appear objective, while all the time they are purely mental forms. Some people have such lively imaginations that they are able to produce vivid externalised mental images when fully awake. Goethe could do this so effectively that he could observe them to be in a state of motion, as if quite material. The visions of subjunctive clairvoyance are not always dis-

*"After Death—What?" Chap. I., pp. 1-5. By Cesare Lombroso.

†"Human Personality," Vol. 1, p. 192. By F. W. H. Myers.

tinct. They vary in the same way as memory pictures. Sometimes they are extremely clear; at others they resemble those memory pictures when, although nothing can be said to be seen, they are nevertheless fully comprehended. Another of the strange vicissitudes to which this form of higher vision is subject, is that the images do not always appear correct in size. Suppose, for example, the form of a person thus appears; it may do so looking either much smaller or much larger than it ought, and we may be sure, is meant to be. The result is the figure of an individual may be seen a pigmy in size, or giant-like! Strange as this seems, it is true that through this faculty a person, to all intents and purposes as real and living as anyone can imagine, may sometimes seem to be only a few inches in height, or so large as to be difficult to wholly retain in the field of vision.

An explanation of this peculiarity may be found in the circumstances which give rise to these visions. They are caused by a disembodied entity wishing to make known his presence—but unable, or, perhaps, unde-

sirous of "building" in etheric or other substance—conveying a mental image of himself to the sensitive's mind. Thought transference in all forms is well established; and since it is a fact among embodied people, there is no reason why the disembodied should not be able to exert it even more successfully, supposing, of course, they are able to communicate with this world. All that is required is a mind sufficiently sensitive to receive their thoughts or impressions, and that is what the subjective clairvoyant possesses. It is quite conceivable that communicating entities should sometimes form imperfect images of themselves, hence the peculiar variations in the visions mentioned above.

These peculiarities render it difficult to distinguish subjective clairvoyance from "distance" or "travelling clairvoyance," *i.e.,* the ability to see physical objects that are beyond the range of the normal eye. They may be behind a wall a few feet away, or at the other side of the world. Mrs. Piper has frequently proved herself capable of exercising this faculty, whilst it has always

been one of the favourite tests of mesmerists and hypnotists when experimenting with their subjects. This type of clairvoyance is excellently adapted to verification. Properly speaking, it is real "clear-seeing" without necessarily anything spiritual about it. There are three states of consciousness in which it occurs, namely, trance, semi-trance, and complete consciousness.

In the trance state, the medium appears to leave his body and visit the places and objects seen, bringing back a vivid account of all that has taken place at the distant spot. This has often been confirmed. Many examples are to be found in the various "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research." Some good cases are recorded by Dr. Fahnestock, of which the following is an instance: A gentleman had requested some friends of his at Baltimore to place something in a particular place in a certain house, after he left the City. The object was to see if any of Dr. Fahnestock's hypnotic subjects could discover it, although they were at Lancaster.

"Subject: Mrs. E. She had never been

in Baltimore in her life," says Dr. Fahnestock, "and after she had entered the [hypnotic] state, it was necessary, as I was not acquainted with the location of the house, for him to convey her in thought to the appointed place. Having done so, I requested her to describe the room, which she did to his satisfaction; and as the thing to be looked at was to be at or about the timepiece, I directed her attention to it, and desired her to look whether there was anything about the clock which did not belong to it. She said she saw something dark there, which looked like a bottle. . . . I desired her . . . to take the article which she before described as being a dark bottle into her hands, and to examine it minutely, so that she could be certain as to what it really was. After having done so, she declared that she now saw it distinctly, and stated that 'it was a dark bottle, about the length of her index finger, and was suspended by a white string, tied about its neck; that it was empty, and had no cork.'

"The gentleman left Lancaster for Baltimore the next day. . . . He saw his friend.

After he had related the circumstances, and told what the lady said, his friend produced the bottle, which had been suspended at the time agreed upon, and which, to their mutual astonishment, they now saw she had described to the very letter.'"*

This phase of clairvoyance, apart from ordinary hypnosis, is usually experienced in the conscious state. Sometimes the distant object may be seen as if through a pipe or a tunnel. There is a teaching that a tube of psychic matter is made consciously or unconsciously by the medium, leading from himself to the object which is seen through it. More often the vision appears to be imprinted on the atmosphere like a cinematograph picture, or a second picture thrown from a magic lantern onto the corner of another picture already on the screen; the first picture illustrating the ordinary surroundings of the clairvoyant, the additional picture the vision.

An excellent example of conscious distance clairvoyance which I was able to verify, was experienced by a lady living in

*"Statuvolism," pp. 229-232. By Dr. Fahnestock.

England, who saw her son in America lying ill in a hospital bed. She had heard nothing whatever of his being ill. In answer to a letter from me, the son stated that he was at the time of the vision in a hospital in Los Angeles, California, suffering from a broken thigh, through falling into the hold of a ship. On another occasion, in my presence, a gentleman saw a lady we were expecting to visit us that day, standing by a table suffering from biliousness. He stated that she had, because of her indisposition, decided not to fulfil the engagement. A few minutes later, however, he became conscious of her having recovered, and added that she intended to come after all. Later in the day a similar thing happened, the clairvoyant remarking that the lady had again recovered and would pay the promised visit. The time in each instance was carefully noted; and upon questioning the lady on her arrival, the facts recorded by the medium proved correct, although on the first occasion she was over four miles away, and on the second only a little nearer to the house in which the visions were seen.

There are occasionally strange variations of time in this and kindred phases of clairvoyance. Sometimes the clairvoyant records as just happening what may have already taken place, or what has yet to occur —second sight. The time occupied in the vision may be considerably less than in the real event. In dreams we have a similar experience; for frequently what then happens in a fraction of time would take years of ordinary life to work out.

Although complete entrancement does not always necessitate leaving the body, it frequently does. St. Paul's experience of being taken up to the third heaven, is not included in this form of clairvoyance; but he probably left his physical body. There are interesting records of people who have claimed to possess the power of doing this at will.

The future promises to see a considerable development in all forms of clairvoyance. Already many are endeavouring to cultivate the gift, and in some phase or another it is probably capable of development by everyone. Should Spiritualism wield the great

influence that appears to be within its scope, people will no doubt grow to regard the unfoldment of so wonderful a faculty as a privilege and a duty. One is almost tempted to predict that we shall all become Spiritualists then.

In most cases the development of clairvoyance is not easy. Although it may be regarded as a "gift," it is one that in the vast majority of instances requires careful cultivation, and sometimes years of patient endeavour is needed for the proper accomplishment of the task. This is an aspect of the subject quite overlooked by the average critic, who usually concludes that to see clairvoyantly must be to those who possess the faculty, as natural as seeing in the ordinary way. From this erroneous view arises much of the bitter opposition against the professional use of psychic gifts, for what applies to clairvoyance applies equally to all forms of mediumship. Even when fully developed, clairvoyance is very delicate. The least unpropitious circumstance may weaken it or temporarily destroy it, while nothing so readily affects it harmfully as the

lack of physical energy. The necessity of keeping in a "fit condition" is commonplace knowledge among all capable psychics, and so essential is this that when there has been a drain upon the health the effect upon the gift is so deleterious that the danger of losing it has to be faced. No doubt if ever mediumship comes to be regarded as of value to the best interests of mankind, precautions will be taken to ensure suitable conditions in which to nurture it, thus conforming to what has hitherto been done for other spiritual advisers. In the meantime—owing to the fact that Modern Spiritualism is still in its infancy, and mediumship, in consequence, only partially recognised—the exercise of psychic powers is left almost without exception to the unaided individual medium, who, as a rule, can no more afford to give his time and services than the average artist, singer, or clergyman. Either the gifts must be specialised or their scope and power greatly reduced. All these difficulties should be overcome, for they sink into insignificance before the wonderful blessings that arise from the use of clairvoyance and kin-

dred gifts, not least among them, says the Spiritualist, being the definite knowledge of the continuity of life and direct intercourse with departed friends. New conceptions of the importance and sacredness of life must inevitably arise from such knowledge; and many of the social and religious difficulties that now harass mankind will then automatically disappear. For, as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has said of the phenomena of Spiritualism:

"They are a device of the Great Designer, by which public attention is drawn to the matter. The higher phenomena have certainly much to do with religion. They are the means by which the truth comes through. But I may add that the truths seem to me to commend themselves by their own intrinsic worth."*

* *The Christian Commonwealth,* December 5th, 1917.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ANTIQUITY OF SPIRITUALISM

Argument against Spiritualism; Spiritualism modern and ancient; Spiritualism the underlying principle of all religions; Hebraism and Christianity originally believed in psychic phenomena; spirit communion; many instances of psychic phenomena in the Bible; disastrous effect on religion of the loss of this belief; Spiritualism in Ancient Chaldea, Egypt, Rome, Greece, etc.; Ancestor Worship in ancient Rome; in China; "spirit-control" in China; Chinese philosophical; Spiritualism among primitive races; witchcraft persecutions; finis.

It has often been urged as an argument against Spiritualism, that if it were true it would have been always known; so important a fact, long sought for by mankind, could hardly have been overlooked, and once found, would never have been forgotten. Religious persons use this argument in a slightly different form. If, they say, God had meant man to communicate with the world of spirits, everybody would have had the knowledge and power from the begin-

ning. The common belief is, apparently, that to be able to hold intercourse with the spirit world is quite a recent claim. Even if that were so, the argument would have no force, it would simply mean that this truth is in the same category as many other truths. Facts of the highest significance are constantly being brought to light which broaden and improve our general outlook. The world has gone on for ages believing certain errors, intensely ignorant of the truth. There is probably no department of thought which cannot contribute examples of this. One of the central and most elementary facts of astronomy is a case in point. Up till comparatively modern times the universal belief was that the sun moved round the world. The struggle for the eradication of this wrong idea was notoriously severe, but the result has been most advantageous.

The fact is the argument does not apply to Spiritualism. There is a tendency to regard what has come to be known as Modern Spiritualism, which originated in 1848, as original and distinct from the much older

Spiritualism that has always existed. In the latter sense, Spiritualism is doubtless the oldest religious belief in the world, for the world has never been without its seers and prophets. The pages of history, ancient and modern, are literally full of examples of psychic phenomena; and long before man learnt to write he told of these wonderful happenings. No country, and probably no race, however small, has failed to subscribe to this. It is, indeed, the underlying belief of all great religions, existing and defunct; although most of them have departed from this teaching. Christianity and Hebraism are instances. A casual perusal of the Old and New Testaments cannot fail to show striking psychic elements throughout them. Not one form of psychic phenomena common to the modern séance-room appears to have been unknown to the writers of those ancient documents. From full form materialisations to the speaking with foreign tongues they give account of all. The gift of prophecy—against which the law to-day so rigorously contends—healing, and "the working of miracles," are mentioned as evi-

dences of spiritual merit. In the old dispensation there was a school of the prophets; in the new, the virtual founder of Christianity—St. Paul—urges his converts to seek after psychic powers. Christianity is a wonderful example of how a religion can not only lose an original belief, but even become its persecutor.

With the departure from the knowledge of spirit intercourse, religion has in many ways degenerated, losing much of its stability and spiritual influence. With the loss of their principal function, priests have been obliged to seek new means of retaining power. In place of the actual knowledge of survival, coercion has been largely adopted. For the purpose of compelling people to accept their creeds, the great religions have linked themselves up with state governments; with what unfortunate consequences history plainly shows. Oppression has become one of their most obvious characteristics, especially exercised in the past. Speaking of the disastrous decadence in the original purpose for which Christianity was established, one of its own most sincere sup-

porters could write in no less vigorous terms of denunciation than as follows: "Through a great part of its history it has been a too constant enemy of freedom. It has been over and over again the main support of tyranny; over and over again it has consecrated misgovernment, and retarded political and social progress; repeatedly it has suppressed truth, and entered into conspiracy with error and imposture; and at the present day it fails most in that which its Founder valued most, originality; it falls into that vice which He most earnestly denounced, insipidity."*

A Church without a vision can hardly hope to become anything else. That, at least, is the view of Modern Spiritualism, which seeks to replace the knowledge of practical spiritual intercourse, believing thereby to make religion what it has so long failed to be—an inspiration, guide, and comfort to the nations. Failing this, is there any other way of checking the conspicuous decline in all forms of established religion at present taking place?

*"Ecce Homo" (5th edition). Preface XVI.

It is unnecessary to mention the Spiritualistic beliefs and practices of all the great ancient civilisations. From Egypt, Babylonia, India, China, Chaldea, Greece, and Rome has come a constantly accumulating mass of evidence proving that all forms of mediumship were exercised in connection with their religions, and that those who possessed these gifts were held in deep respect, often reverenced. If there was one fault more than another into which these ancient races fell, it was in attributing too much to the spirits. This is one of the errors Modern Spiritualism aspires to correct; for Spiritualists do not *worship* the dead. They seek to *commune* with them and to *learn* from them more of the meaning and sacredness of life and the true worship of God.

Some of the greatest characters of the ancient world openly claimed to possess psychic powers. Socrates in his defence before his judges in the fourth century B.C., claimed that something "supernatural and divine" came to him. "I have had this since a child, a kind of voice coming to me." Nor was his power limited to this phase. In the

Crito of Plato reference is made to a previsision he had. Crito expressed his belief that on the morrow the great sage's life would have to end, as the ship that was to take him to Delos was to arrive that day. Socrates said he did not think the ship would arrive at the time stated, and that he would not die before the third day because, "A fair and beautiful woman, clad in a white gown, seemed to come to me and call me, and say, 'Oh, Socrates, the third day hence shalt thou fair Phthitia reach,' " and the meaning of this dream was clear to him.

The ancient Romans, who were greatly influenced by the ancient Greeks in their religious thought, were essentially Spiritualistic. Ancestor worship, especially in the adoration of the Lares or Lords, the good spirits of the dead, was probably the most important and universal of their religious customs. To neglect this service was to act irreverently towards the departed. Every home had its tutelary spirit of the family. Sometimes, at least, this important benefactor was conceived as being a deceased ancestor and as such was specially represented

on the family shrine in the image of a man in wood, stone, or metal. But he was only the head of a host of spiritual relations who were believed to visit the home from time to time. In addition, each man and woman had his or her Genius or Juno, a guardian spirit whose special care was the general welfare of its charge.

The head of the household and his family saluted the altar daily with morning prayer and an offering from the table after the chief meal was over, a portion of it being laid on the fire on the hearth, or placed on the table before the shrine. There were at least two reasons for doing this: as a recognition of the assistance rendered by the departed to the family; and as a symbol of the fact that although the invisible host could not join with them in the meal at the table, they nevertheless recognised their right to do so.

The last of the great Pagan Emperors of Rome affords an insight into the existence of psychic gifts and the production of psychic phenomena as practised in the "inner circles" of Roman Paganism. The Emperor

Julian is said to have been initiated into the mysteries of the ancient faith when a young man, and, in addition to entertaining the most exalted conceptions of Deity and the duty and spiritual destiny of mankind, to have been able to hold direct intercourse with the unseen world. "By voluntary fasts," writes Edward Gibbon, "he prepared his senses and his understanding for the frequent and familiar visits with which he was honoured by the celestial powers."* Libanus, his friend, declares that Julian lived in perpetual intercourse with spiritual beings, who sometimes seem to have appeared to him in materialised form.

What is known as "ancestor worship" has never lost its influence in the world. The phrase is often misapplied, and no doubt as the claims and practices of Modern Spiritualism become better understood, anthropologists and those interested in comparative religion will realise this. Spiritualists, for instance, have frequently been accused of worshipping the dead, when they really do not—it is an act of which they are

* "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Vol. 2, p. 368.

entirely guiltless. To the uninformed the mere suggestion of belief in spirit communion conjures up this notion of worshipping the dead. No one thoroughly acquainted with psychic phenomena appears among the list of so-called "authorities" who have written upon the subject of ancestor worship; yet such a person alone seems qualified to appreciate the attitude of mind associated with a keen esteem for the memory of those who have been loved and admired, and who have passed into the Great Beyond.

The Chinese are notorious as "ancestor worshippers," and almost every book written on the Flowery Land contains something on the subject. Belief in survival after death and intercourse with the departed is so strong among the inhabitants of China, that missionaries, seeking to propagate their various religions in that land, admit that it is hopeless to expect to eradicate the ceremonies custom demands shall be paid to the dead. No religion, indeed, can hope to survive in China unless prepared to incorporate among its principles these ancient practices. Eminent Christian missionaries, fully

acquainted with the views of the Chinese on this and other religious points, declare "ancestor worship" to be not only not a vice, but a virtue; and say that Christianity may gain by countenancing it, because, they assert, the Chinese do not really worship the dead, but honour and respect them. Archdeacon Moule says that the educated and thoughtful people of China entertain no hostile feeling towards Christianity; but unless Christians cease to make it an indispensable condition of discipleship that a Chinaman shall abandon the ceremonial and reverence he believes to be due to his ancestors, there is little chance of Christianity flourishing among them. He once informed an educated Chinese mandarin—who had pointed out this difficulty to him—that the adoration of the dead, or, at any rate, the idea that they form an intermediate order between God and man, that they are intercessors of mankind with the Supreme, and that they must be propitiated with sacrifice and offering, are altogether opposed to the Christian conceptions. "Sir," rejoined the mandarin with emphasis, "you are mis-

taken. Ancestor worship is *not* idolatrous. It has *not* the high significance which you imagine. It implies merely a reverential and affectionate rite in memory of the departed, whom we desire to serve in their absence as though they were still present with us." * The Archdeacon repeated this conversation to a missionary of forty years' residence in China, and this gentleman assured him that this view of ancestral worship was at least a possible one, if not the whole truth about the matter. Perhaps, after all, ancestor worship is not confined to the East, for in addition to many Westerners showing particular deference to their "dead," we are in the habit of retaining something more than the memory of them. George Washington appears in the *lararium* of almost every American drawing-room; and Westminster Abbey, "that temple of silence and reconciliation," must, we are informed, seem to the Chinese eyes far more idolatrous than one of his great ancestral temples; for the Abbey is full of images, and the ancestral halls have none. It seems, therefore,

* "New China and Old," p. 195. By Archdeacon Moule.

that we are no more justified in expecting the Chinese to cease reverencing their departed friends and relations, than they would be in demanding that we destroy the photographs or paintings or statues of our deceased parents, children, and friends; and sweep from our churches, cathedrals, abbeys, and public places all the representations in stone, pigment, and glass of heroes, martyrs and worthies whose memories we love to cherish, and whose lives we consider worthy of imitation.

That the Chinese go much further than the performance of rites and ceremonies in connection with their dead is well known. The famous Secret Sect, which has its branches throughout China, appears to be something like an organised psychical movement. During its meetings the leader is supposed to be under the influence of some spiritual power which entrances him; and while in that condition he "sees visions and dreams dreams." Another example of what Spiritualists call "spirit control" is mentioned by Archdeacon Moule.

"I passed by a low hut one day, among

the hills, before which a great crowd stood, some of them pressing through the dark door, but some of them listening, and watching outside. The crowd moved as I approached, and I saw a young man swaying to and fro in great emotion, and muttering some incomprehensible words. He was possessed, they told me, by the soul of a man recently dead; and with hushed and almost awe-struck interest, they were listening to the words."* Let us not forget these wonderful people, who retain the beliefs which more materially progressive races have long since lost, are characterised more by the philosophical sense than by religious emotions. They look to the great philosophers, Laotse and Confucius, for spiritual guidance, rather than to a sheer abandonment of thought in favour of feeling. Emotion is not a strong feature of the yellow race; and this makes them more capable of judging the accuracy or otherwise of psychic phenomena.

No lengthy mention need be made of the persistence of the belief in spirit inter-

* *Ibid.*, p. 175.

course among the many primitive races. It seems, without exception, the cardinal point in all their creeds. Their tutelary Gods are frequently the spirits of their own fathers or grandfathers, as in the case of the famous Matabele chief, Lobengula. Medicine men and witch doctors are distinguished from their fellow tribesmen by the wonderful psychic powers they are supposed to be able to exert. But other persons besides recognised sorcerers are believed less frequently to be subject to inspiration from the unseen world.

What is more interesting, is that Europe has never been without personal testimony of these things. It has had its saints and great characters, who, like St. Theresa and Joan of Arc, heard strange voices, saw visions, and possessed gifts of prophecy or of healing that were certainly not of this world. There were also many of lesser note, whose only reward in the intolerant Middle Ages was imprisonment, torture or death. No one can read of the terrors of the witchcraft persecutions without a sigh at the excesses into which ignorance hurried often

the best of the land; and the intense agony inflicted upon thousands of our fellow creatures by the hand of bigotry. Yet there can be little doubt that many of the wonderful things attributed to the unfortunates who were dragged with jeers and curses before their relentless judges were actually performed by them. Before the advent of Modern Spiritualism and its long line of scientific inquirers one might well hesitate to say this, but it is now difficult to deny it. After allowance has been made for falsehood and exaggeration, a great deal is left over unaccounted for except by psychic science; and of this much bears the unmistakable impression of spiritual agencies. No doubt many of the confessions wrung from the lips of the helpless victims by the torturer were due only to the desire to escape further torment, but many of these unfortunate mortals were unquestionably good mediums. The seeing of spirits, healing of the sick, foretelling of events, and sometimes—as in the case of poor Bessie Dunlop—the actual materialisation on the part of spirit entities were experienced. One can speak more confidently

of Bessie Dunlop because nothing could persuade her to deny the goodness of Thom, the spirit whom she and her neighbours claimed to help her in her labour of love and service among her fellow citizens. Thom, she said, was the spirit of one Thom Reid, who had been killed at the Battle of Pinkie, twenty-nine years before. Wonderful as were the good deeds he did through his medium, he could not save her from the bitterness of her death, for she was "convict and brynt" upon the Castle Hill, Edinburgh.

How much better it would have been for the human race had people like Bessie Dunlop received sympathetic treatment, and their remarkable claims examined, none can say; but it is not without reason to conclude that progress would have been accelerated in several respects. There might never have been that gulf between religion and science which has loomed so conspicuously on our mental horizons during the last hundred years; for science would more quickly have discovered evidence proving that a spiritual world exists and that the human family, so far from being threatened with extinction at

death, really through it is resurrected to a superior state of existence.

How much longer this duty would have been neglected but for Modern Spiritualism it is impossible to tell. It has been Spiritualism's particular task to emphasise the importance of paying serious attention to all forms of psychic phenomena. Whether it has always adopted the wisest method for the accomplishment of this will, no doubt, be a matter of controversy; but that it has already in part succeeded no one can justly deny. This has been no easy task. The opposition has been bitter, and often stimulated by a groundless contempt or a purposeless fear. It has had to dash itself constantly against the rock of long established ignorance, prejudice and scepticism, but not without avail. To Christians it speaks with a direct appeal. The spiritual world which they believe exists and which they believe acted on the material world two thousand years ago is no figment of the imagination. Modern Spiritualism proclaims it to be even now a demonstrable fact. Surely this is important! "Never, perhaps, did man's spir-

itual satisfaction bear a smaller proportion to his needs than it does to-day."

Let it be clearly understood that the Spiritualist makes no claim to infallibility on matters spiritual. He merely speaks of things as he has found them. It may be that for generations to come patient effort will be required to unravel fully the often confused phenomena which give us trace of the spiritual world; but the inquiry is full of promise. Already it convinces us that with the persistence of consciousness, there is the persistence also of love and justice; a strengthening of all that in the best sense mankind has agreed to call good. And if it should not confirm the darker pictures which the unlearned mind and distorted imaginations of men have conjured up in connection with the hereafter, surely that is no loss but a great gain. The Spiritualist is convinced that before each of us there lies a path of eternal progress, and all who will may tread therein, just as he is convinced that for all who sin there is punishment of a retributive nature, and for all righteousness a sure and fitting reward; and remember, above all

things, that he believes these not because he has been taught to believe them as articles of faith, but because he considers he has received evidence which compels him to accept them as matters of fact.

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What is this spiritualism?

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